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Learning from multilingual teachers of English

by

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ABSTRACT

The changing nature of English Language teaching in today's world, driven by the forces of Globalisation, prompts a number of questions about the roles and identities of English language teachers. Previously acceptable dichotomies, notably 'native/non-native speaker' and 'Centre/Periphery' are consequently being challenged in studies of who teaches English, where they teach it and what they teach. I embarked on the current study because I felt that the 'native/non-native' dichotomy did not adequately describe the knowledge and skills of English teachers I had worked with worldwide.

I developed a qualitative interpretative approach, as befitted the interpersonal nature of the study, and gathered data by recording conversations with fifteen participants from seven countries about their experiences of learning, using and teaching English in their contexts. The rich content they provided enabled me to delve below the oft-quoted dichotomies and uncover qualities rarely acknowledged in multilingual teachers.

The most important features identified in the study concern the diminished importance of the 'native speaker' and the concomitant growth in the confidence of the multilingual teacher. My data reveals that this confidence has been acquired through depth of linguistic knowledge, through observance of other cultures, and through resistance to the encroachment of English by finding a place for the language which satisfies the needs of multilingual users without requiring subservience. In discovering these strengths of multilingual teachers, my exploration of their contexts demonstrates the importance of stepping outside the boundaries of one's own limited environment and appreciating the range and depth of knowledge which individual English teachers are able to draw on to take ownership of their professionalism.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCING THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This study investigates the beliefs and attitudes about English Language Teaching (ELT) held by teachers who speak more than one language and who have studied and worked in countries where English is not the first language. Attention paid to the role of English in the world has only recently shifted from what is being taught to who is teaching and this important shift allows for an acknowledgement of the diversity of English language teachers, reflected in the knowledge and skills flowing into the profession from a variety of sources. It is timely to investigate the experiences of English language teachers worldwide and in particular, in this thesis, the experiences of multilingual teachers of English.

For this investigation, I chose to focus on a group of teachers studying in Australia or England who had been university or college English teachers in their own countries. They had therefore learnt English as a second or third language, used it in their own varying contexts and taught it to students in their countries.

1.2. Personal motivation

My own career in English Language Teaching resulted from an interest in languages which led me to develop a degree of curiosity about the linguistic strengths of those who learnt English themselves before teaching it to others. While working in a university in Japan and concurrently taking Japanese lessons, I found the structure of Japanese, with its particles, verb classes, limited use of pronouns and ability to add tense endings to adjectives, not only intriguing for one used to Romance languages, but illuminating for understanding the problems my Japanese students were experiencing. I developed a new respect for my bilingual Japanese colleagues and began to wonder about the superior skills of people who could move so effortlessly between two widely differing language systems. The best I could do was to attend Japanese classes, of which the main outcome, apart from basic communication skills, was to acquire some knowledge of how the Japanese language worked, and hence what caused difficulties for my students. I soon realised that if I could gain benefit from a few months learning Japanese, my bilingual colleagues

must be much better qualified. At this time I was mainly guided by the work of Medgyes (1992) but it was several more years before I developed my own research focus, when I moved to teach in Malaysia. Malaysia, as a post-colonial society, had been more aware of the threat of English to its institutions and values, to the extent that English had been replaced as the language of instruction by Bahasa Melayu after independence in 1957. My impression was that Malaysians were more wary of accepting native English speakers into their higher education institutions than the Japanese had been, possibly because memories of the colonial past were still strong and Malaysia as a nation was still evolving. Japan, on the other hand, despite occupation by US forces, seemed confident of its firmly rooted cultural identity and university English lecturers could be assigned a place in the system without anxiety. These personal impressions would need further research to be validated but I record them here as a backdrop against which the emerging research focus can be set.

Linguistic and cultural backgrounds then, acquired significance for me as I experienced them. Immersed in other cultures, I came to question previously accepted practices in my own. For example, was it such a bad idea on the part of the Malay college to send reports of adult students to the parents, with whom the students still resided during college breaks? Perhaps parents should continue to be responsible for their children for longer, instead of setting them free as they are encouraged to do in the West.

Many opportunities for reflection arose from my role as program director in Malaysia. Issues discussed by Holliday (1994) came to life for me. 'Appropriate methodology' had to be considered in the light of the local context and the controlling institutions had not always thought beyond transferring aspects of an accredited program from one country to another, for the principal purpose of enhancing the prestige of both. Success had to be negotiated rather than taken for granted. Working with local staff enabled me to recognise the benefits of local knowledge and spurred my interest in studying the strengths of the 'non-native speaker' teacher. Thus personal experience led to professional and personal motivation as I began to read more about attitudes to 'non-native' speaker teachers, which brings me to further motivation for the research – the approaches taken in the current literature. These will be discussed in depth in Chapter 2 but here I wish to signal the main themes that inspired the study.

1.3. The research questions

The focus of my research was narrowed as the project developed. Having been prompted by my own experience, I found that the original proposal needed fine-tuning to better reflect the direction I was heading in. Having decided upon a formal study entitled ‘Investigating and describing the linguistic and cultural expertise of bi- and multi-lingual teachers of English with the aim of suggesting ways of incorporating this expertise in English language teaching programs around the world’, as I progressed with my data collection, I realised that ‘Investigating and describing’ were active verbs which did not accurately reflect the processes I was engaged in. This was partly because they conveyed an inappropriate sense of superiority and detachment, particularly as the subject matter was not encompassed within ‘linguistic and cultural expertise.’ Equally, these verbs seemed to limit the research process, whereas ‘learning from’ allowed for a more discursive exploration of the themes and issues that emerged from participant disclosures, without prior limitation. However, my primary focus remained ‘bi- or multilingual teachers’ was strengthened by my reading on the topic. The word ‘multilingual’ as a descriptor highlighted the linguistic skills of language teachers, and its apparent relevance drove me to study its emergence in the literature, justifying my original choice of ‘bi-’ or ‘multilingual’ as an alternative to ‘non-native’. A broad definition of ‘multilingual’ is found in Kramsch:

Under ‘multilingual’ subject, I include people who use more than one language in everyday life, They might not know all these languages equally well, nor speak them equally fluently in all circumstances (Kramsch 2006: 100-101)

‘Multilingual’ describes my participants because it brings into focus the important element of linguistic knowledge while, at the same time, diminishing the value of the term ‘native speaker’ and also hopefully, dismantling the ‘Centre/Periphery’ divide (discussed below). The word ‘multilingual’ being inclusive, does not refer exclusively to ‘native’ or ‘non-native’ speakers of English but to skills important for the attainment of professional excellence.

Once I had established that the focus was ‘learning from the experiences of multilingual teachers of English’, my research questions became:

1. How do multilingual English teachers take ownership of their professionalism in contexts where English is not the major language?

2. How do multilingual teachers of English view the place of English in countries where it is not the first language?
3. What are the issues facing multilingual teachers in a changing English language teaching context?

The second and third questions supplement the first, which is important if we take ‘ownership’ to imply the control and successful management of their professional role. Ownership is a necessary concept for defining professionalism as it suggests that those who can be said to have it do not need others to tell them how to perform. The attainment of a level of ownership does not need to be explicitly acknowledged, but it is implicit in what teachers have to say about their behaviour, particularly concerning their reflections about attitudes to English in their environments.

Ownership of one’s professional context strengthens when continuity from first awareness of the teaching context as a learner and user of the language is established. Furthermore, ownership of the profession extends in a number of directions as the strengths resulting from ‘multilingual experiences’ are uncovered. By ‘multilingual experiences’, I mean those activities associated with learning and using languages that contribute to linguistic and sociocultural understanding, such as interaction with foreigners and codeswitching as expressed in lived episodes. In addition to these defined activities, participants also allude to experiences on a more abstract, reflective level, showing how language relates to culture and identity and involving, for example, postcolonial attitudes and language loss, prompted by experience of one’s local context.

These research questions prompted a cascade of further questions necessary to clarify current knowledge and illuminate the directions planned in this thesis such as asking what is already known about the topic: who are multilingual teachers, what do they do and why is it necessary to know? Searching for answers prompted more detailed study of major topics in the literature, such as the ‘Centre/periphery’ and ‘native/non-native’ distinctions, with further questions to be asked about their continuing relevance.

1.4. Key ideas from the literature

1.4.1. The ‘real world’

In shaping this project, I found a great deal of support in the literature and discovered, firstly, a way of clarifying the field with these words of Widdowson:

There is a confusion here, then, between two kinds of knowledge, two kinds of reality: that of disciplinary expertise and that of domain experience. Each has its own legitimacy, and each can draw support from the other: expertise uses experience as data to substantiate its abstractions and experience can be reformulated in reference to the expertise. But the crucial point is that if these reformulations are to be effective, they cannot simply be unilaterally imposed. They must also take local ‘real world’ conditions of relevance into account. Hence the need to mediate across these two realities without giving undue primacy to either. (2005: 24)

Widdowson has here formulated what I found to be a valuable guide for shaping PhD research. The ‘two kinds of reality’ described enable the recognition of ‘local conditions’ which are an essential part of my research, in that my aim is to show how knowledge of ‘the real worlds’ of multilingual teachers is essential for explaining their professional practices. There is further clarification in his subsequent definition of applied linguistics:

[applied linguistics] explores how the problems that folk experience with language in real world domains might be clarified, reformulated, made more amenable to solution by reference to the abstract representations of language that linguistics (hyphenated and otherwise) has to offer. (ibid)

Separating applied linguistics into these two domains illustrates the need to probe more carefully aspects of the ‘real world’. The context of English language teaching is a part of the ‘real world’ that cannot be overlooked and in my conversations with English language teachers, I have been seeking to find a balance between expertise and experience by indicating how experience may influence expertise, in this case the experience of learning English and using it in a particular context, before pursuing a career teaching it.

With this emphasis on the ‘real world’, I found further support for investigating the lived experiences of English teachers in diverse contexts from Canagarajah:

It is important to find out how linguistic hegemony is experienced in the day-to-day life of the people and communities in the periphery. How does English compete for dominance with other languages in the streets, markets, homes, schools and villages

of periphery communities? How does English infiltrate the hearts and minds of the people there? What is missing, then, is a micro-social perspective - the lived culture and everyday experience of periphery communities. (1999b: 41,42)

My investigation of teachers working in ‘periphery’ communities aims to develop this ‘micro-social perspective’ because I have the opportunity to speak with experts whose immersion in the field enables them to articulate perceptions which are immediately relevant to an understanding of English use around the world. In this way, it is possible to present a many-faceted view of a globalised profession.

1.4.2. From ‘native speaker’ to ‘multilingual speaker’

... primary pedagogic conceptualization in TESOL is very much conditioned and constrained by the binary categories of native and nonnative speakers as well as by the predominance of Western perspectives to the teaching of culture (Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 717)

This observation by Kumaravadivelu supports my contention that it is necessary to discover **who** is teaching English, and **where** it is being taught and, in the process, improve our understanding of the current state of the profession, in order to better inform the next generation of teachers. Use of the ‘native/non-native’ categories can distort professional values and my research participants have helped me illustrate some of these. Moreover, the ‘pre-dominance of Western perspectives’, controlled as it is by the ‘native speaker’, inhibits clear thinking about the influence and meaning of culture. As a western-educated teacher it has been my aim in this research to learn about the diversity of contexts in which English teaching takes place.

I have been guided by my reading to select certain keywords and concepts as relevant to my research questions. In addition to ‘native/non-native’ and multilingualism, they include ‘centre/periphery’, post colonialism as well as the dominant pedagogic influences of ‘Communicative Competence’ and ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (CLT) on the development of English language teaching around the world. Contributing to these influences are linguistic, cultural and social factors operating in a range of contexts. It is the impact of these contexts on English language teachers that I wish to examine because there can be no real appreciation of the current state of the profession without an appraisal of its current members.

This appraisal requires reference to the influences of globalization, in particular cultural globalization, as will be supported in my review of the literature. Cultural globalization will be shown to contribute to shifting identities as individuals adopt aspects of cultures they are exposed to and a need to revisit and redefine cultural barriers will arise as awareness of English learning, teaching and use in multilingual contexts is enhanced. Such, then, is the theoretical background against which I can test what I have learnt from my participants about understanding how English is learnt, used and taught around the world.

Consequently, it is hoped that what will emerge from this study is a better understanding of English in the world and how this understanding can be transferred to new practitioners who might still be hampered by inadequate or inappropriate views of themselves, particularly concerning the definition and relevance of ‘native speaker’. This contribution to knowledge explores a ‘native speaker’ teacher’s evolving understanding of ‘non-native speaker’ identities in such a way that there can be a revaluation of the significance of the terms for a global profession. The ‘native speaker’ researcher is presenting her interpretation of what others have told her about themselves and their circumstances, in such a way that her own, and the professional awareness of others like her, may be enriched.

Appreciating the impact of change is also a major aspect of understanding and defining the English teaching profession today. The explosion of English as a world language has generated huge controversy (Pennycook, 1994; McKay, 2002; Jenkins, 2003) but the evidence of its dominance is unassailable. Hence the role of a ‘world language’ involves a consideration of who in the world uses it, how they have learnt it and who teaches it. By interviewing English teachers from seven countries, I am able to present a manageable, qualitative analysis of the role of English in their lives, in such a way as to update current understanding of the profession.

1.4.3. Reconceptualising the ‘Centre’ and the ‘Periphery’

There are many published studies of teachers who travel from the Centre to the Periphery and are strongly influenced by what they observe (e.g. Holliday, 1994) as well as those of teachers coming from the periphery to the centre (e.g. Mantero, 2007). However, there are few studies dealing with the ‘periphery’ teachers who have studied in the ‘Centre’ and are working in their local environments, and that is the subject of the current research. My participants were able to

draw on knowledge of at least two English Teaching/Learning contexts. Their knowledge of their own contexts is not mediated through my observation but through my interpretation of what they tell me and thus is closer to their impressions, not being distorted by my view of where they are.

Listening to multilingual teachers enables fellow professionals, whether multilingual or not, to form a clearer picture of unfamiliar contexts. Moreover, there are myriad adaptations of methods taking place in centres whose priorities are almost unknown and largely unconsidered, as Holliday observes with reference to an English teaching situation in Hong Kong. He summarises evidence from ‘Centre’ practitioners as follows:

From these examples, it becomes clear that when English-speaking Western TESOL travels and establishes itself in other locations within world TESOL, while rooted in the particular but complex set of institutional and commercial circumstances within the English-speaking West, it moves and adapts in equally complex ways. The methodologies it carries with it are never pure and are mediated not only by the circumstances within which they find themselves but also by the biographies of the people who carry them. (Holliday, 2005b: 40)

My research considers the reverse trend of non-Western TESOL practitioners, who began their professional journeys in non-Western environments, then travelled to the ‘West’ before returning ‘East’ to make sense of their acquired knowledge. The complexity and lack of purity are the same, but from different directions, with the added dimension that I, as the researcher, originate in the ‘West’ and have travelled to and from the ‘East’, or ‘non-West’. This change of direction is important for providing a balanced view of how English is taught and by whom, removing the West from the centre of the picture and encouraging other views. These ‘other’ views, once described as ‘periphery’ have been reconceptualised by some researchers as ‘epicentres’ (Pakir 2001) and I will consider this development further in Chapter 3. For the moment, it suffices to state that the research is underpinned by such shifts in concepts, indicating changing perceptions of who has influence in the world of ELT.

1.5. Themes arising from the data

When I began this study, I believed that describing the differences between ‘non-native speaker’ and ‘native speaker’ teachers of English would constitute the core of the research but, as I became engrossed in what participants told me of their own professional beliefs and practices, I

began to see that native-speakerhood could occupy really only a small part of English teacher skills and identity. The topic is still important, however, because opinions of the role and suitability of foreign teachers, expressed by host teachers, have hitherto not been widely published, although there is research on the reverse situation, for example opinions of ‘non-native speaker’ English teachers in the UK expressed by ‘native speaker’ teachers (cf. Aboshiha, 2008). In addition, there is often a difference between the postcolonial and the ‘non-colonial’ situation, with the former countries relying less on outsiders because they have developed their own varieties of English. ‘Centre’ perceptions of native speaker teachers working in non-English speaking environments often revolve around a mythical expertise possessed only by those who were born speaking the language but these perceptions are being challenged, particularly by researchers who do not come from the ‘centre’ (e.g. Canagarajah 1999b).

While at one stage in the history of English teaching it was arguably relevant to distinguish between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’, changes in how identity is perceived in the era of globalisation will be shown to have an impact on how we view these distinctions today. Teachers’ descriptions of their contexts for learning, using and teaching English are suffused with a richness and depth which, it will be argued, have hitherto been insufficiently exploited profession-wide. Furthermore, linguistic and cultural perspectives emerge in the course of conversations, providing the opportunity to delve beneath the ‘native/non-native’ distinction and discover the complexities masked by this accepted terminology. In fact, casting teachers as ‘native’ or ‘non-native’ runs counter to the postmodern blurring of borders which recognises a lack of fixity in how individuals define themselves.

In summary, in the course of data analysis, the themes that stood out through repetition and depth of commentary may be divided into two broad areas. Firstly, they concern individual professional identities and involved a review of the role of the ‘native-speaker’, a reconceptualisation of the ‘Centre/Periphery’ definition and a more focused consideration of the place of English in the lives of individuals living in countries where English was not the major language. Secondly, there was a reconsideration of teaching methodology in which participants explained how they interpreted concepts such as CLT or learner-centredness to suit the environments in which they worked. Across all these themes there was a noticeable development

of confidence in the way multilingual teachers seemed to manage English in their lives alongside unrelated languages and cultures.

1.6. Participants and context for the study

In this research, the fifteen ‘non-native speakers’ I engaged with fall into a fairly specific category according to three main criteria: profession, definition as ‘non-native’ speakers of English and current occupation. Professionally, they are all English teachers who worked or have worked in institutions of higher education in their own countries. As ‘non-native speakers’, they began their lives speaking ‘other’ languages than English, which they began learning during their schooldays. They could therefore be defined as ‘non-native speakers’ (Davies, 1991) but given the increasingly dubious reputation of this term, I prefer, as I explained above, to call them ‘multilingual’ and emphasise the value of speaking additional languages. Another shared feature is that they have moved to an English-speaking country where they are continuing their education as English teachers at postgraduate level. At least two individuals are intending to make their futures in an English-speaking country, so for them there may be some different priorities, but the majority are, according to their plans when the interviews were conducted, returning to their countries of birth.

The interviews, or conversations, were recorded in fairly relaxed circumstances in coffee shops or other congenial places on university campuses where the participants were studying, or nearby, so as to minimize disruption to busy schedules and foster a friendly, informal ambience.

1.7. Thesis structure

The answers to the main research questions outlined above were obtained through systematic analysis of the data, gathered through in-depth recorded conversations, which prompted a specific structure. The broad outline of the topic engendered the next chapter, a review of current literature to serve as a background to summarising professional themes developed by the participants. More specifically, understanding current attitudes to concepts of Globalization and Culture enables me to explain the activities of my participants, preparing the way for defining their views with the goal of enriching universal appreciation of how the profession operates. Chapter 2 considers aspects of Globalization and Culture, which frame a survey of views of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the strongest and most globally pervasive

methodology discussed in the data. Moreover, because all of the participants mentioned CLT in the course of conversations and it became for some an extended topic of discussion, I decided it would be important to preface their observations with an overview of current research, which, in many cases refers to the influences of Globalisation and Culture.

Chapter 3 moves on to a consideration of the changing features of English language teacher identity, with particular reference to views in the literature about the rise of multilingualism as a possible replacement of the ‘native speaker’. Research is beginning to show that multilingual teachers may have different opinions about the kind of English they wish to teach often according to the context in which they operate and this validates the importance of looking more closely at local contexts of teaching.

Chapter 4, describing the qualitative research methodology adopted, is followed by three data analysis chapters, each taking one of the major activities characterizing language study: Learning English, Using English and Teaching English. Participants’ observations and reminiscences fell naturally into these three areas of ‘learning, using and teaching English’ which, moreover, illustrate the essential activities defining English teachers. Teaching, as the main activity justifying this research, is more fruitfully considered after investigating approaches to learning and using the language, principally because the main purpose of the study is to understand the contexts of English language teaching and an exploration of these contexts cannot omit background influences of language learning and language use. The links between learning, using and teaching English reflect the dynamic nature of globalized identity. From one perspective, it is possible to describe a continuum from learning, to using, to teaching but it is not the only perspective, as all three activities can be simultaneous, as well as unending.

In Chapter 5, participants’ memories of the important moments in their English language learning journeys are examined to reveal how these experiences contribute to the development of the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher by, especially, highlighting the role of context. In the next chapter, attitudes to using English show the place of English in environments where it jostles alongside a range of other languages. This background deepens insight into the world in which multilingual teachers organise their professional skills, seeking to achieve a balance between

external and local demands, setting the stage for Chapter 7, in which participants describe their approaches to and beliefs about teaching English.

The evidence produced in these three chapters requires further comment from the literature in the field, this time with a focus on specific pedagogic and personal issues. Chapter 8 summarises the issues identified in the data, and develops them with reference to the literature, preparing the way for Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, summarising the implications and suggesting directions for further research.

CHAPTER 2 GLOBALISATION AND CULTURE AS A BACKDROP TO RECONCEPTUALISING SOME MAJOR ELT THEMES: VIEWS FROM THE LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction: recognising global shifts in thinking

This chapter is the first of two, surveying published research relevant to the study. The present chapter focuses on how beliefs about Globalisation and Culture influence the world of English Language Teaching, to the extent that certain key concepts, such as Communicative Competence, need to be redefined to reflect these global trends. In this way, the world of multilingual English teachers is integrated into the dynamic cultural and global flows characterising the twenty-first century. The acknowledgement of change is necessary to establish a background for learning, using and teaching English. Chapter 3 surveys research about multilingual teachers, providing a shift in focus from the world of teaching to the teachers themselves, making a progression from the content of English Language Teaching and the forces shaping it in this chapter, to a consideration of the evolving identities of the individual players and their moves to take ownership of their profession in what follows.

Globalisation has a worldwide impact, affecting every sphere of endeavour around the world and evidence of its influence is apparent everywhere. Culture, on the other hand, is a concept which, although difficult to define precisely, nevertheless has a strong presence in all fields involving human interaction. Of the two terms, Globalisation is perhaps the more straightforward as evidence of its influence can be readily provided, although there is a degree of controversy surrounding its benefits. Culture, on the other hand, is often disguised behind other complex issues, needing many more terms to explain it, such as Cultural Reality, Critical Cultural Cosmopolitanism, Cultural Hybridity and Cultural Identity. These themes need exploring before embarking on further elaboration of my thesis because, firstly, the acknowledged impact of Globalisation in terms of the unprecedented movement of ideas, languages and individuals around the globe validates the investigation of a range of attitudes to a global profession. Secondly, a study of current beliefs about Culture provides guidance in interpreting what people say about unfamiliar circumstances, such as the contexts of multilingual teachers. An appreciation of how English is made use of in non-English speaking background countries

requires a flexible understanding of cultural factors, by which I mean coming to grips with the diverse and unexpected realities that emerge in the course of data gathering.

Broadly speaking, these diverse realities are acknowledged in much of 21st century thinking, premised upon a postmodern view of the world which has swept away objective certainty. In its most extreme form, such a view can lead to disintegration and doubt, or in the words of Davies ‘solipsism and anomie’ (2003: 156). The same criticism is made by Brewer (2000). The relevance of the postmodern debate for English Language Teaching is considered in some depth by Pennycook who considers ‘the slipperiness and contradictions of postmodernism’ preferable to ‘the emancipator claims of modernism’ (2001a: 136). A consequence of this way of thinking is that it becomes more difficult to pin down concepts like identity, as remarked upon by Otsuji:

However, Pavlenko (2001), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Giampapa (2001:2003) and Lo, (1999) acknowledge that identities are negotiable and dynamic, and that the ties between language and social factors such as nation, ethnicity and territory have become more flexible and creative. The use of a particular language may not simply connote monolithic national, territorial and ethnic connections but is a much more complex practice. ... a simple correlation between language, culture and nation is questionable. (Otsuji, 2008: 115)

Such flexibility influences all spheres of understanding, and points to the importance of re-evaluating the multilingual teacher, whose identity has shifted into new areas as English language itself becomes disassociated from culture and nation in its assertion of a global presence. The relevance of defining ‘native speaker’ is accordingly diminished as the uses to which English is put acquire diverse significance. The ease with which individuals around the world communicate has made the possibility of stepping outside one’s pre-ordained role, whether of class, gender, culture, religion or nationality, an accepted commonplace and language has a role to play in all these ebbs and flows. Indeed, the metaphor of the tide is relevant because it allows for movement and the ability to switch back and forth between identities, with a different emphasis for each. In the presence of so much movement, the description ‘non-native speaker’ English teacher is fast becoming an anachronism insofar as it suggests a static position offering little room for manoeuvre. It might be asked if all these ebbs and flows lead to a lack of substance and an inability to define any recognisable features of language or its users. In fact, there are signs of the emergence of new identities, created from different tidal directions; it is currently difficult to isolate the characteristics of these new identities emerging as we speak, but

they need to be acknowledged because they indicate the directions to be taken by future generations of language teachers and users.

Manifestations of change in definitions of Globalisation and Culture, with associated concepts of fluidity and flexibility, provide a framework to support the dominant ELT pedagogic theme of CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) which is in the process of being redefined by multilingual teachers, as the data will show. Although there are a number of pedagogic themes which could illustrate changing professional attitudes, such as Critical Thinking, or Learner Autonomy, I chose to explore Communicative Competence and its satellite method, CLT, because these were the themes alluded to most frequently by participants, and their choices determined the shape of discussion. A summary of shifting views of Communicative Competence, and how these shifts are seen by researchers to underlie changing approaches to language teaching, foreshadows the data analysis, particularly Chapter 7, where participants describe how they see the influence of CLT on their teaching.

2.2. Globalisation – as background to understanding ELT

Globalisation is tightly woven into twenty-first century pictures of the world and therefore its particular place in my research needs to be justified. Its influence was mentioned by my participants, as a given, rather than as a new and exciting concept and it is not a strong focus of discussion, which, in line with the research questions, concentrated on the local and the individual. Yet, even if Globalisation is outside the core investigation of this thesis it has had an undisputed impact on the English teaching profession and must therefore constitute an important segment of the background to the study. The range of discussion is indicated by three immediately relevant titles: Fairclough's *Language and Globalization* (2006), Kumaravadivelu's *Cultural Globalization and Language Education* (2007) and the collection edited by Block and Cameron: *Globalization and Language Teaching* (2002). All three have something to say about the relationship of language and Globalisation, but from very varied standpoints. Fairclough's book, in keeping with his reputation, takes a strong political stance and develops his Critical Discourse Analysis approach, extremely valuable for the light it sheds on defining Globalisation with reference to language use across disciplines. Of greater immediate relevance are the books by Kumaravadivelu and Block and Cameron, the former for its breadth of knowledge about

language teaching across cultural boundaries and the latter for its selection of contributions dealing with language teaching contexts around the globe.

Block and Cameron survey opinions about the historical evolution of Globalisation. Regarding definitions, they quote Giddens, who defines globalisation as ‘the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa’ (1990 cited in Block and Cameron 2002:1-4) This definition is highly appropriate to the global enterprise of English language teaching as explored in the present study because these terms neatly express the ‘globalisation’ of the profession. ‘Social relations’ indeed link the ‘distant localities’ of English language teachers in countries around the globe and ‘events’ may be interpreted as the establishment of teaching institutions based on beliefs about appropriate methodologies developed ‘many miles away.’

Block and Cameron go on to summarise the positive and negative aspects of Globalisation, quoting from a range of authors and once again refer to Giddens for a positive consequence of the phenomenon:

For Giddens, the breakdown of tradition in many parts of the world along with increasing access to information has made it possible for those at the bottom of the social ladder to reflexively construct their own identities. (ibid.4)

This consequence will be discussed later in relation to Identity but, with the influences of Globalisation on language teaching, it is relevant to note that Block and Cameron include the commodification of language, technological change and changing political conditions as features of Globalisation which affect language teaching, further discussed below. Evidence of all these features will be identified in the data analysis chapters.

Kumaravadivelu discusses Globalisation at length in Chapter 3 of his *Cultural Globalization and Language Education* (2008a). He introduces the topic with a description of outsourcing processes, showing how young workers in Indian call centres suffer the negative influences of Globalisation through being made to adopt an American or British accent and name, and following a work schedule which suits the working hours of the United States and Europe. This example refutes the ideal expressed in the quote by Giddens above, which implies that those ‘at

the bottom of the ladder' are enabled to reconstruct their identities for their benefit. Moving on to a definition, Kumaravadivelu writes:

Simply stated, globalisation refers to a dominant and driving force that is shaping a new form of interconnections and flows among nations, economies and peoples. It results in the transformation of contemporary social life in all its economic, political, cultural, technological, ecological and individual dimensions. (2008a: 31-32)

It might be helpful to briefly examine Fairclough's definition of globalisation, as this confirms the complexity of the phenomenon. Speaking from outside the realm of education, Fairclough makes the point that:

A vast amount has been said and written about globalisation and this in itself makes it a difficult and sometimes confusing issue to write about. It is made more confusing if we do not distinguish what has been said and written by whom, and differentiate the main sources of all this talk and writing (2006: 5)

Thus, while Globalisation is a major feature in the lives of multilingual teachers of English, the extent to which its analysis is taken into account in the development of this study depends on where the analysis comes from. Critical Discourse Analysis in fact considers the positioning of the writer of a text and takes this orientation into account. I do not claim to analyse data in this way but mindfulness of Fairclough's warning above about the positioning of the writer will certainly help achieve clarity. Fairclough's work then, is relevant for this study in the way it investigates the influence of Globalisation on language in society, which parallels my interest in language in context. While 'language in society' involves the many ways in which language is used in the wide range of social situations in which human beings engage, 'language in context', for my purposes, is concerned with the interdependency between language and the local environment of its use.

In his preliminary review of academic literature on Globalisation, Fairclough outlines four important points of controversy:

One is whether globalisation spells the end of the nation-state as the primary economic and political unit. Another is whether globalisation is a phenomenon specific to the last few decades, or a cyclical phenomenon over several centuries. A third is whether globalisation is a primarily economic phenomenon, or a diverse set of phenomena (economic, political, cultural, military, ecological) which are substantially autonomous, though certainly interconnected. A fourth is whether globalisation amounts to homogenisation, or whether on the contrary, globalisation is

consistent with diversity within all the different phenomena it encompasses. (2006: 15)

Some of these questions affect the current study for a number of reasons. Firstly, regarding the end of the nation-state, complex questions of identity and language will need to be considered. These are bound up with issues concerning post-colonialism and language teaching (cf. Pennycook, 1998; 2001a) to be discussed later. The third question, concerning the range of phenomena to which Globalisation could be attached, is of interest particularly for its economic, political and cultural aspects as these, too, are strongly involved in English teaching, as the data chapters will reveal. In fact, most researchers today would agree that Globalisation is more than an economic phenomenon, as summarised by Pennycook:

As Giddens (1999), Castells (2000) and others have shown, globalisation is not only about economic processes, but political, technological and cultural processes as well. Globalisation may be better understood as a compression of time and space, an intensification of social, economic and political relations, a series of global linkages that render events in one location of potential and immediate importance in other, quite distant locations. (2007: 24-25)

In addition to suggesting an answer to Fairclough's question about the range of phenomena which Globalisation relates to, Pennycook's definition emphasises the same factors as those discussed above, reinforcing a sense of the interconnectedness of human activity on a global scale. At the same time, it appropriately highlights the unprecedented technological developments which have made considerations of time and space almost inconsequential in ways not imagined by most people even fifty years ago.

Finally, to return to Fairclough's comments, the question of homogenisation or diversity is highly pertinent because it parallels the influence of English on diverse cultures and languages. The underlying sense of this question is similar to Kumaravadivelu's observation above that 'people all over the world are faced with unparalleled opportunities for their cultural growth, and with equally unparalleled threats to their cultural identity' (ibid).

'The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization' (Appadurai 1990: 295). The tension between homogenisation and diversity is thus translated into opportunities for cultural growth made available through learning about different cultures, which at the same time threaten cultural

identity by ‘homogenisation’, i.e. allowing all individuals to acquire the same sets of cultural values. The global use of English plays a major role in maintaining or disturbing these tensions and it is the aim of this thesis to uncover how English teachers at the interface of these cultural and linguistic tectonic plates are managing, in the course of their daily lives, to deal with desired, and undesired, changes.

2.2.1. Globalisation and English language

The impact of Globalisation on English has been viewed from a number of perspectives, including the role of Empire (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), the opposition of nationalism in ‘Periphery’ countries (Canagarajah, 1999b), and, moving from this wider ideological picture, to looking at what happens in classrooms, (Cameron, 2002; Gray, 2002). There are also many studies of Globalisation in specific communities, for example, Kubota, (2002) and Canagarajah (2002).

According to Kumaravadivelu, there is a ‘dangerous liaison’ between ‘The forces of globalisation, empire and English’, which ‘are intricately interconnected. Operating at the intersection where the three meet, TESOL professionals, knowingly or unknowingly, play a role in the service of global corporations as well as imperial powers.’ (2006: 1) Furthermore,

English, as a global language, will continue to serve the communicational needs as well as the propaganda purposes of both globalisation and empire. The mutually advantageous liaison between the project of globalisation, the power of empire, and the politics of English is complex but clear (2006a: 13)

Regarding these local/global tensions Pennycook suggests that there is much more involved.

It is common to view globalisation in terms of two axes, the global and the local: on the one hand the dominance of particular cultural and linguistic practices, on the other the maintenance or development of local practices. ... The multidimensional nature of both dominating modes of globalisation – corporatization, capitalization, conceptualization – and of resistant and localizing modes – transculturation, translocalization, transformation – lead to very different linguistic and cultural practices than international domination or national localization. (2007: 23-24)

This view to some extent parallels attitudes to the simplification of concepts when described through dichotomies expressed elsewhere in this thesis, with respect to, in particular, ‘native/non-native’ and ‘Centre/Periphery’. It is also interesting in its recognition of the complex

features covered by the ‘local/global’ axes, raising questions about the processes involved, to take one example, those described as ‘localizing’ and using the prefix ‘trans’ with its associations of crossing and transcending. Pennycook (2007) in fact devotes more attention to the notion of ‘trans’ later in the same book in the chapter entitled ‘Transgressive theories’ (ibid: 37-57). The movement which takes us beyond the fixity assigned by dichotomies is evident in his discussion of the ‘resistant and localizing mode’ of transculturation, which he sees as being more about ‘bending, borrowing and blending of cultures’ than about ‘the spread of particular forms of culture across boundaries’ (ibid: 47). Alongside transculturation, Pennycook examines the notion of transidiomatic practices, to refer to ‘the communicative practices of people interacting across different linguistic and communicative codes, borrowing, bending and blending languages into new modes of expression’ (ibid). Seen in this light, the phenomenon of globalisation can only be adequately investigated when the relevant local circumstances are brought into focus, allowing for the constant interplay required to make meaning. Furthermore, the term ‘transidiomatic practices’ enhances understanding of global language use and may also assist in a redefinition of ‘world Englishes’ for teaching purposes.

In her contribution to the collection she edited with Block, Cameron discusses how communication skills have been affected by Globalisation. Having established the growing importance of interpersonal communication skills in late-modern societies, due to dislocation from formerly close-knit communities as well as a demand for these skills to be taught in workplaces, Cameron points out a tendency to ethnocentrism:

Many of the communicative strategies which are most enthusiastically advocated by experts in this [Western] tradition, such as speaking directly (the key recommendations of assertiveness training) and engaging in open self-disclosure, are problematic in cultures whose notions of personhood and modes of social organization diverge markedly from the Western/Anglo mode. ... But many experts continue to give the impression that they regard their own norms as universal desiderata – the standard for ‘effective communication’ rather than one possible, culturally and contextually specific version of it. (2002: 80-81)

2.2.2. Globalisation and the multilingual English teacher

In a summary of the effects of Globalisation on language teaching, Block observes, ‘For language teachers around the world, the question is how discussions about globalisation taking place in sociological circles relate to their overall approach to language teaching and to their day-

to-day practice' (2004: 76). Canagarajah probes the notion of 'day-to-day practice' by raising these issues, emphasising the contradictory influences rather than the advantages:

So the challenge to periphery communities is this: while the demands of globalisation and internationalism would encourage the learning of English, the equally strong pull of nationalism would motivate resistance to English. How can these contradictory demands be reconciled? Rather than asking which tendency is going to win over the other, the more important questions to pose are: How do people learn to live with these tensions in their everyday life? How do they transform these constraints in their favour? How do they creatively manipulate these tensions to conduct their life with dignity and self-determination? (1999b: 76)

Canagarajah has here articulated questions which lie at the heart of my research insofar as they focus on major issues arising from the contradictions inherent in Globalisation, which he has brought down to the level of the everyday and the impact on the individual. My participants have not indicated, on the whole, that they see Globalisation as a force opposing nationalism but, as the data analysis reveals, it is possible to see tensions in the way they balance English alongside their own languages, cultures and identities. Thus Globalisation, as defined earlier, can exert a contrary force on English use, leading individuals away from their own, locally conferred backgrounds. An important aspect of this study, then, is to assess how far these recognised forces of Globalisation encourage and /or discourage ownership of their profession by multilingual teachers of English.

Globalisation, can be seen both as the homogenizing influence which is driving teachers to insist on a particular dominant brand of communication, overriding cultural and contextual objections and as the heterogenizing influence described by Canagarajah (op.cit.) - a concrete example of the tension described by Appadurai (1990), above, ' which underpins the investigations of all the experts referred to in this section. These opposing forces have both positive and negative consequences which demand critical understanding rather than wholesale acceptance of the phenomenon. Its existence drives individuals in a range of directions, affecting what they choose to do with their lives culturally, linguistically, politically and economically, leading to the need to reconceptualise the management of activities and interactions, notably regarding English language teaching, as it crosses borders and cultures.

2.3. Culture – as background to understanding ELT

As a result of the intensification of relationships across borders it is becoming more difficult to define cultures as static entities (cf. Canagarajah, 1999b). My understanding of Culture in this section has been refined by reading, in particular, Geertz, Kumaravadivelu, Canagarajah, Pennycook, Holliday and Ghosh. A further important dimension is provided by Said, with his discussion of the complexity of culture in a colonial world. I chose these writers because their research embraces most comprehensively the themes which arose in the course of data collection, involving interactions between individuals from diverse backgrounds. Geertz, moreover, as an anthropologist has had a profound effect on the development of theoretical beliefs in applied linguistics, having been widely quoted by the remaining authors, apart from Ghosh. I have included Ghosh in this list because his autobiographical novel, *In an Antique Land* (1994), evokes a world of disjointed cultures which illuminates a great deal of the theorizing on the topic.

The importance of maintaining some kind of background awareness of culture for the current study is that the concept, when thoughtfully explored, encourages an open and critical appreciation of difference. This is especially pertinent for many researchers, including myself, who have not always been accustomed to multilingual, multicultural societies. It has, in my experience, been a complex journey, in which I have had to beware of a tendency to over-define the concept, as Holliday explains:

One of the impacts of the reassessment of what is considered real is a shifting of attention from trying to define too closely the precise nature of a particular culture to describing the more universal roles of discourse and ideology in culture formation and the structure of cultural chauvinism. Perhaps one of the problems we have had with the notion of culture in academic and professional discourses is that the technicalization of these discourses has demanded too much definition of particular cultures. (2011: 194)

With this criticism in mind, my aim in considering the various properties of culture is to signal possibilities for making sense of the world I am investigating, rather than providing absolute definitions which can be applied to the data. It will be seen during the course of this study that culture is only one way of explaining what people do and say. There are occasions when other

factors intervene and when our limited understanding of culture does not allow us to judge appropriately.

As Canagarajah has observed, in words that show the parallel development of current thinking regarding culture and identity:

People are not prepared to think of their identities in essentialist terms (as belonging exclusively to one language or culture), their cultures as monolithic (closed against contact with other communities), and their knowledge forms as pure (uniformly local or centralised) (2005:196)

What has emerged is the much discussed phenomenon of ‘cultural hybridity’ (Kumaravadivelu, 2008a) but before proceeding to discuss this postmodern development, I wish to consider some pertinent definitions of culture, although most writers agree that the term defies definition.

In a survey entitled ‘The Idea of Culture’ (2008a: 9-13), Kumaravadivelu begins with comments about the elusiveness of the concept by such authoritative voices as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall. He then goes on to quote Geertz’s definition, according to which culture ‘denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life’ (Geertz, 1979 cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008a: 10). These words come from Chapter 4 (‘Religion as a cultural system’) of Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures* and they are prefaced by a similar reference to negative understandings of culture as found in Kumaravadivelu’s other sources. Geertz also writes: ‘The term ‘culture’ has by now acquired a certain aura of ill-repute in social anthropological circles because of the multiplicity of its referents and the studied vagueness with which it has all too often been invoked’ (ibid). Geertz claims that his definition is an attempt to remove this ambiguity. It is true that such a definition, with its reference to ‘historically transmitted’ and ‘inherited’ patterns and symbols, helps clarify the development of these concepts over centuries for particular groups of people. Although ‘symbolic forms’ is a term immediately applicable to religion, the subject of Geertz’s investigation here, and one that he goes on to elaborate, it needs to be thought about and extended to cover the range of human activity embraced by ‘culture’. We then have a basis for making culture a relevant topic for deepening the study of English teaching in diverse contexts.

Geertz gives some examples of cultural patterns in the context of the Javanese society where he carried out fieldwork:

To be human is not just to breathe; it is to control one's breathing, by yoga-like techniques, so as to hear in inhalation and exhalation the literal voice of God pronouncing His own name – 'hu Allah.' It is not just to talk, it is to utter the appropriate words and phrases in the appropriate social situations in the appropriate tone of voice and with the appropriate evasive indirection. It is not just to eat; it is to prefer certain foods cooked in certain ways and to follow a rigid table etiquette in consuming them. (ibid: 53)

These images relate culture to the individual's behaviour in the world by illustrating how actions can be interpreted on several levels. The human action of breathing can be taken one step further when imbued with a cultural meaning, in this case, controlling breathing to honour God and so 'human' becomes 'cultural' as actions acquire specific meanings. Although these examples come from Java, it is not difficult to find substitutes in whatever cultures one is familiar with, at the same time perhaps reflecting on the various gains and losses resulting from the evolution of a culturally globalized world. The gains can be said to refer to the awareness of a range of cultural symbols which have evolved for basically similar purposes, such as explaining the nature of God, while the losses could refer to the dilution of these cultural symbols with outside influences, making them less unique. To apply these examples from Geertz to a familiar culture, it is possible to ascend to the metaphysical, imagined religious plane, or to develop his other, more basic example from the 'table etiquette', with varieties of which everyone has some familiarity. British culture requires cutlery to be placed in a certain order and used in specific ways, just as Japanese culture requires chopsticks to be placed and used according to what is considered good manners. It is not difficult to learn these superficial aspects of cultural behaviour which, although different, have the same goals, namely, eating food in a 'civilized' manner. English teachers around the world may have goals which appear at variance but there is an underlying professional commonality of purpose defined by the task of teaching English, in the same way as the above example is defined by the process of eating. It follows that appreciating, even if not fully understanding, the existence of cultural patterns in a particular context will enable the researcher to adopt an open approach in analyzing a given phenomenon.

Understanding the worlds of multilingual English teachers entails a consideration of culture at a level of profundity similar to Geertz's because it drives the researcher to focus on why certain

steps are taken, through recognizing how these steps fit into the ‘cultural symbols’ which are an intrinsic part of the teachers’ lives. By seeking to define culture with reference to his own research world, Geertz has rendered the concept less vague and considerably more useful to developing an understanding of the individual in the world.

2.3.2 Hybridity and cosmopolitanism in culture

The two concepts of hybridity and cosmopolitanism are similar in their insistence on removing fixed boundaries. Cultures are hybrid in that they do not exist in isolation: every culture is related in some way to another and similarly, cosmopolitanism denotes belonging to a wider world or cosmos than can be readily defined as fitting into a narrow space, either physically or mentally. The terms are relevant because the shifting borders and increasing connectivity experienced by citizens of today’s world do not allow cultures to be fixed and recognizable in shape but rather chameleon-like in their capacity to absorb and discard almost randomly:

Hybridity is a concept that is at once conventional and contemporary. It is conventional in the sense that it connotes a long-established anthropological belief that all cultures are basically hybrid cultures. It is contemporary in the sense that it presents a post-modern, postcolonial twist to a traditional concept by incorporating a key feature of present-day life among a particular, cosmopolitan segment of the population, a life lived in a third space, a life characterized by border-crossing. (Kumaravadivelu 2008a: 139,140)

This summary by Kumaravadivelu hones in on hybridity as an essential defining feature of culture; it is evident in post-colonialism, in the struggle between the indigenous and the imperial, as well as in cosmopolitanism, which he described earlier in the same chapter as ‘reject[ing] the essentialist notion of culture that assigns fixed and frozen cultural traits to majority as well as minority groups in a society.’ (ibid: 126) Cosmopolitanism is further explored by Holliday in a similar vein with his development of ‘Critical Cosmopolitanism’. Opposing a ‘critical cosmopolitan’ view of culture to a ‘neo-essentialist’ view, Holliday summarises the former view as ‘acknowledged complexity’ and the latter as ‘imagined certainty’. Moreover:

There are some interesting but significant twists in the difference between critical cosmopolitanism and neo-essentialism. Critical cosmopolitanism is postmodern in the manner in which it sees ideology in everything and does not accept the stated neutrality of neo-essentialism, which appears modernist in its projection of a neatly organized world with accountable theories of difference. (2011: 13)

The ebbs and flows of an individual's cultural make-up can be understood within the critical cosmopolitan framework if neo-essentialism is rejected, as when individuals define their own cultural reality:

Cultural reality can form around and be carried with individuals as they move from one cultural arena to another. Being part of one cultural reality does not close off membership and indeed ownership of another. Individuals can have the capacity to feel a belonging to several cultural realities simultaneously. (Holliday 2011: 52)

A benefit of globalisation, then, is this opportunity possessed by more and more individuals to develop 'cultural realities' as they learn to turn a 'neo-essentialist' view into a 'critical cosmopolitan' understanding, that is, they become sufficiently familiar with 'other' practices to be able to form an ideological judgement of their own. In other words, to build on Holliday's earlier discussion, 'imagined certainties' are complexified by becoming 'cultural realities' because a critical factor is then introduced which negates the certainty previously imagined. A strongly worded example is afforded by a famous critic of culture, Homi Bhabha who refers to the Western stereotype of 'the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the Oriental'(1994: 95), 'imagined certainties' which have taken centuries to deconstruct, with the help of critical cosmopolitanism. Stereotyping then becomes more difficult as the unknown becomes known. This is a major cultural benefit of Globalisation, providing as it does the opportunity for 'Asiatics' and 'Orientals', among others, to become known as human beings. Within the world of TESOL at least, Holliday has sounded an optimistic note. There is a comparison to be drawn between his discussion of critical cosmopolitanism with Said's observation that

in our age of media-produced attitudes, the ideological insistence of a culture drawing attention to itself as superior has given way to a culture whose canons and standards are invisible to the degree that they are 'natural', 'objective' and 'real' (Said 1983: 9).

In these words can be noted the same insistence on 'reality' and the lack of a 'superior' culture implies the same coexistence of several cultures in individual lives. A second note of optimism is heard, moreover, when Holliday's critical cosmopolitanism is seen to overtake both Bhabha's and Said's views of colonial cultures. The ideal notion of belonging to 'several cultural realities' may be preferable to a view of culture which 'differentiates "us" from "them" almost always with some degree of xenophobia'(Said 1994: xiii). The enterprise of English Language Teaching,

as this study will show, allows for flexibility in intercultural understanding, although the ‘Us/Them’ distinction, as seen in Holliday’s discussion of native-speakerism (2005b), can still be detected. Another recommendation for avoiding the pitfalls of these socially destructive ideologies can be found in Burr, who makes this recommendation: ‘The particular forms of knowledge that abound in any culture are therefore artefacts of it and we should not assume that our ways of understanding are necessarily better than any other ways’ (1995: 4). ‘Other ways’ are becoming more and more accessible, as the next section shows.

2.3.2 Some examples of culture across borders

There is a clearly defined central theme running through these discussions of culture in today’s world. Through the choice of terms such as ‘hybridity’, ‘border-crossings’, ‘multiple identities’ all the writers above acknowledge the interconnectedness and fluidity of cultures. Problems can arise, however, when a preference for one cultural reality over another is exhibited, leading to stereotyping and cultural fixity. These dangerous interpretations of cultural difference have an insidious influence on English language teaching, as Pennycook has observed with regard to China. Surveying the evolution of a culturally fixed attitude to China during the nineteenth century in Europe, when the predominant image of China was of a passive, backward, semi-civilised nation, buried in its own refuse, Pennycook shows how these attitudes have prevailed today in travel writing, notably in the works of writers who have also been English teachers. He quotes from Salzman’s first impressions of China: ‘The smell of nightsoil, left in shallow outhouse troughs for easy collection, wafted through the streets and competed with the unbelievable din of automobile horns to offend the senses’ (1994: 177). Further evidence of this negativity is found in Johnston’s first impression of China: ‘I felt as if I had arrived at the ends of the earth: this cavernous and dusty, echoing airport perched in a black void was an antechamber to purgatory’. (ibid: 179) The unmistakable Christian symbolism here adds another layer to the sense of doom as this Western traveller descends into the Oriental abyss. Summarising these discourses on China, Pennycook highlights their insidious influence on travellers, readers, and finally, English teachers:

Such discourses work at multiple levels: as a mode of production of the symbolic (the texts and reviews), as a means of producing subject positions (the positions taken by Theroux, Salzman, Johnston and readers), and as a means of knowing embedded in society’s institutions (the publishing industry, schools, universities and

so on). Significant too has been the position of Salzman and Johnston as English teachers. It is such discourses, I have been suggesting, that construct part of the work and the knowledge of the Western English teacher overseas. Travel writers cross the national borders that they use to define each new cultural context (dwelling as we saw, on the process), and at the same time this travel writing crosses the borders between popular culture and ELT. (ibid: 181)

The common sense underlying this link between travel writing and ELT is immediately apparent for those of us who have taught overseas and for whom the first link with a new country has often been someone else's published travel experiences, usually a practical travel guide, or a narrative. Of course, not all travel writers adopt an imperialist, otherizing stance. William Dalrymple for example, writes with affection and gentle humour about his experiences in India, while to take Pennycook's notion of travel writing crossing borders a little further, Amitav Ghosh traverses the genres of travel writing and the novel with *In An Antique Land* (1994), a work with considerable significance for this thesis because of the way it deals with cultural stereotyping and attitudes to difference. Not only do his experiences support my methodological approach (see Chapter 4) but they also illuminate my discussion of culture and identity.

In an Antique Land deals with characters, real and imagined, whom Ghosh encounters during time spent learning Arabic in Egypt as a PhD student. A further layer is added to the recount by the subject of the research – a twelfth-century slave to a Jewish merchant conducting trade with Egyptians. At a cultural and linguistic interface, as a Hindu living with Muslims and researching the Indian slave of a medieval Jewish merchant, Ghosh sometimes faces problems dealing with Egyptian officialdom, as on the occasion he tries to visit the tomb of a long-dead saint, confounding the young official at the tomb's entrance by not fitting into known foreigner stereotypes:

Opening my passport, he thumbed through it again, from back to front, coming to a stop at the page with my photograph.

'Are you Jewish?' he said.

'No.'

'Muslim?'

'No.'

'Christian?'

'No.'

When I said no yet again, he gave a snort of annoyance and slammed my passport on the desk. Turning to the others, he threw up his hands. Could they understand it? He asked. Neither Jewish, nor Muslim, nor Christian – there had to be something odd afoot. (334-5)

This anecdote is another example of cultural fixity leading to misunderstanding as first one, and then a second, Egyptian official have difficulty comprehending Ghosh's presence at the site. The officer in charge is as mystified as his underling:

‘But you’re not Jewish or Israeli’, he said. ‘You’re Indian – what connection could you have with the tomb of a Jewish holy man here in Egypt?’

He was not trying to intimidate me; I could tell he was genuinely puzzled. He seemed so reasonable and intelligent, that for an instant I thought of telling him the story of Bomma and Ben Yiju [the slave and the Jewish merchant from the twelfth century]. But then it struck me, suddenly, that there was nothing I could point to within his world that might give credence to my story – the remains of those small, indistinguishable, intertwined histories, Indian and Egyptian, Muslim and Jewish, Hindu and Muslim, had been partitioned long ago. (ibid: 339)

Ghosh's final sentence here implies regret for the disappearance of cultural complexity from this scene. The ideology of critical cultural cosmopolitanism does not seem to have penetrated this village, although it was once there, in the ‘intertwined histories’ of characters from the past. With this phrase, Ghosh suggests a past for these diverse groups where in fact there was no need to acknowledge cultural separation, illustrating Holliday's observation about individuals being able to belong to ‘several cultural realities simultaneously’. Unfortunately, though, in this context, as in many others, cultures have become defined and fixed to such an extent that it is impossible to conceive of any blending or sharing of beliefs. If the Egyptian officials in this recount had been able to imagine that an Indian researcher might want to visit a Jewish tomb in Egypt as part of a quest for a particular fragment of cultural knowledge, then the suspicion and doubt that resulted would have become superfluous. The scenario presented by Ghosh offers a parallel to the imagined borderless profession of ELT in which cultures are no longer seen as separate, monolithic entities (Canagarajah, 1999b).

2.3.3 Culture and language

The construction of knowledge as shifting and dependent upon myriad changing factors epitomizes current thinking, whether it is labelled ‘postmodern’ or ‘late modern’ because, partly as a result of the technological revolution, we have become used to transience, both of language and of location. The movement of people around the globe has resulted in new identities being

forged at an unprecedented pace, after exposure to new and varied cultural patterns, as summarized by Block:

In the work of many social scientists, there has been a movement away from a preoccupation with stability, function and structure to a priming of individual agency and a shift from fixed essentialised versions of demographic categories such as race, ethnicity, gender and age to a more generally constructive perspective which sees these categories as more fluid and unstable. (2007: 3)

Following a similar trajectory, Holliday has also abandoned notions of fixity with his investigation of the idea of nation and summarizes it as ‘an external frame which may be in conflict with personal cultural identities’ (2011: 66). Having considered the views of his research participants, he develops the notion of complexity in language use:

When considering what people say about themselves it may be more realistic to speak not of individual cultures but of cultural identities that are built differently for different people around diverse cultural realities, arenas, universes and markers, and dependent on personal cultural trajectories. Language may be a constituent part of this complex, and dependent on different histories and politics. (ibid)

The relationship of language and identity has been further examined by Blackledge, and can be taken to illustrate how Holliday’s view of the personal fits into the global, as follows:

In multilingual societies, language choice, use and attitudes are inextricably linked to language ideologies, relations of power, political arrangements and speakers’ identities. Identity options available to people at a given moment in history are subject to change, as are the ideologies that legitimise and value particular identities more than others. The shifts and fluctuations in language ideologies and in the range of identities available to individuals have become particularly visible during recent socio-political and socioeconomic trends and events, including globalisation and the postcolonial search for new identities. (Blackledge, 2005: 35)

The external imposition of identity, then is no longer desirable, as individuals become aware of the range of influences which enable self-definition. Blackledge has reached conclusions regarding language and identity which parallel Holliday’s findings about cultural identity, quoted above, namely the possibility, enabled by current global flows, to select and refine one’s identity, through language as much as through culture.

2.3.4 Nation, culture and the multilingual teacher

Concepts of nation and culture are inextricably bound up with multilingual teacher identity because they help determine the role of language and hence, approaches to teaching it. The danger of both concepts is that they can reinforce a static, essentialist view of the 'Other'. Kubota advocates taking a critical multiculturalist stance:

Contrary to liberal multiculturalism, which tends to represent the culture of the other as homogeneous, traditional and static, critical multiculturalism views culture as diverse, dynamic and socially, politically and discursively constructed. When one closely examines a certain nation, it is evident that people's ways of life exhibit diversity in regard to ethnicity, region, age, gender, class, sexual orientation and so forth. Also, culture constantly shifts under the influence of political, economic and technological developments as well as domestic and international relations of power. (Kubota, 2004: 38)

Kubota's comments about culture are a strong justification for making an effort to understand diverse teaching contexts, since the argument for cultural diversity within one nation must mean that transnationally, diversity increases exponentially. The concept of critical multiculturalism can be manipulated to encourage a closer examination of local contexts because it would allow for local influences to be taken into account.

Holliday's discussion of Critical Cultural Awareness takes this complexity further with his distinction between external and personal realities, as in this example regarding 'nation':

Nation is often an external cultural reality which provides a framing for identities which may be in conflict with personal cultural realities. It can also represent an idea which stimulates personal cultural realities. (2011: 54)

In comparison with Kubota's reference to nation above, as containing considerable diversity, Holliday is concerned with a personal view of nation, according to which individuals define themselves, while Kubota suggests an outsider looking at and analysing a particular nation's cultural manifestations. The different positions are interesting because Holliday places emphasis on the individual's construction of culture, making use of their perception of certain realities, whereas Kubota classifies individuals according to externally constructed features. Understanding and defining a personal view of culture can thus be seen to depend on a

multiplicity of factors, which arise from the context and history of the individual concerned. Similarly the concept of Nation has both an external and a personal meaning. Nation and culture then, are intertwined concepts which have a large part to play in a multilingual world. They are, moreover, integral to understanding the multilingual teacher, who may express different perceptions of nation and culture, depending on a range of contextual influences.

All the above writers provide a backdrop to the study of culture and its relationship to English Language Teaching, summarised by Pennycook with this play on the acronym: ‘The “SOLs”[Speakers of Other Languages] of TESOL[Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages] are fixed and defined and determined by their cultures, whether this be in the way they write (cross-cultural rhetoric), the way they learn (learning strategies), or in the invitations for them to tell us about their own cultures’ (1998: 189). Pennycook, Holliday and others have taken major steps to reduce the impact of cultural fixity on ELT and I will be making the point in this thesis that it is by familiarising ourselves with those once thought of as ‘The Other’ that we will succeed in reducing the impact still more effectively.

More than any other educators, language teachers face distinct challenges and opportunities to help learners construct their cultural identity because it is mostly in the language classroom that learners come into contact with unfamiliar languages and cultures. In such a contact zone, language operates not merely as a mode of linguistic transaction, but also as a medium for cultural expression.
(Kumaravadivelu, 2008a: 175)

The connections between ‘Language’, ‘Culture’ and ‘Identity’, are apparent here as Kumaravadivelu analyses the responsibilities of language teachers in the classroom ‘contact zone’. He goes on to show the importance of ‘cultural transformation’ over ‘cultural information’ asserting that the latter

... entails a long journey into a rediscovery, and a consequent redesigning of one’s own identity. This self-exploratory journey helps us get a realistic view of our place and our community’s place in the cultural universe. And, as Montovani put it, when a journey leads us to expand the boundaries of our identity to the point at which we include in the ‘we’ what was previously simply ‘other’, our journey is a return home, we come full circle (ibid: 180)

This comment reinforces my belief in needing to become familiar with Kumaravadivelu’s ‘Other’ above, and, at the same time, is reminiscent of Said’s observation that:

The more one is able to leave one's cultural home, the more easily is one able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance. (1979: 259)

The achievement of 'true vision' is an expression of the goal of this research, insofar as it involves acquiring an understanding of how human beings are motivated by sets of cultural symbols familiar to them, but not always appreciated outside their contexts. Learning about how people assess their contexts throws light on one's own and extends knowledge to allow for acceptance of difference, as well as providing background to understanding how pedagogic knowledge is interpreted. In the next section, I consider a major aspect of this knowledge, Communicative Competence, and its offshoot, CLT, with particular reference to how global changes are affecting the application of these terms.

2.4. Reviewing Communicative Competence

The concept of Communicative Competence has sustained its major role in defining approaches to language teaching since it was proposed by Canale and Swain in 1980. Nonetheless, the formulation has been criticised by a number of researchers, including Widdowson, (2003: 165ff) and Kumaravadivelu, (2006b: 16-18), with regard to its elusiveness. This elusiveness may in part be due to the multitude of factors impacting on its definition, as noted by Saville-Troike. Her summary of Communicative Competence is enlightening for an appreciation of the linguistic skills of multilingual speakers, especially regarding the relationship of language and culture. She writes:

Ultimately all aspects of culture are relevant to communication, but those that have the most direct bearing on communicative forms and processes are the social and institutional structure, the values and attitudes held about language and ways of speaking, the network of conceptual categories which results from experiences and the ways knowledge and skills (including language) are transmitted from one generation to the next and to new members of the group. Shared cultural knowledge is essential to explain the shared presuppositions and judgments of truth value which are the essential undergirdings of language structures, as well as contextually appropriate usage and interpretation. (2003: 19)

The complexity of factors involved in Communicative Competence described here supports the need to go beyond monolingual, monocultural understandings. My discussion of Globalisation has shown how rare it is to find monocultural, monolingual societies and those who believe

themselves to be part of such societies are now in the minority. The knowledge possessed naturally by multilingual individuals is only beginning to be recognised as a strength by those individuals themselves, as well as by the dwindling numbers of monolinguals who formerly held sway, as Saville-Troike observes:

For individuals who are members of multiple speech communities, which one or ones they orient themselves to at any given moment – which set of social and communicative rules they use – is reflected not only in which segment of their linguistic knowledge they select, but which interaction skills they utilize, and which aspects of their cultural knowledge they activate. (ibid: 21)

Making these choices is symptomatic of an awareness of linguistic and cultural variety which are not part of the ‘ideal’ monolingual speech community previously imagined by linguists (ibid: 22). Problems are caused by measuring Communicative Competence against this ideal monolingual community, which does not exist in today’s world.

The concept of Communicative Competence has further been criticised by many applied linguists for not embracing multilingual features; in contrast, it depended on the ‘native speaker’, as stated by Rajagopalan:

Even when the focus shifted from the Chomsky-inspired ideal of ‘linguistic competence’ to the Hymesian, presumably more liberating, notion of ‘communicative competence’, it was the figure of the native speaker that invariably served as the yardstick with which to measure the adequacy of policy decisions, the efficacy of methods and authenticity of materials, the learners’ proficiency and so on. (Rajagopalan, 2004: 114)

In a similar vein, Leung (2005) has made a strong case for ‘reconceptualizing communicative competence’ by relating it to the notion of the idealised native speaker and he argues convincingly against the persistence of ‘native speaker authority’.

If we ask the question How much grammar does a native speaker of English know and how much of this knowledge can s/he use?, it becomes obvious that one cannot really answer this question without shifting the terms of reference by saying It depends on which native speaker/s and in what context. In other words, the abstract construct of the native speaker ceases to be useful as soon as we try to extract descriptive details from it. (2005: 130)

This point, namely that all native speakers are not equal, but possess varying degrees of linguistic expertise according to their life situations, diminishes the native speaker still further, in this case for purposes of defining Communicative Competence. The argument serves to strengthen the position of multilingual teachers, who are not necessarily aspiring to be omnipotent, or to show themselves as superior to ‘native speakers’ but who are simply in a context that is familiar to them and so are endowed with the confidence to make appropriate decisions. Returning to local concerns, as advocated by Leung, would allow the base of communicative competence to be broadened to embrace varieties of English hitherto unexplored:

In the light of what we now know in terms of World Englishes and ELF, it is quite clear that, from the point of view of curriculum conceptualization, the unquestioned and routine adoption of a particular native-speaker variety of English and a particular set of idealized social rules of use is no longer educationally satisfactory or desirable. (Leung, 2005: 139)

Furthermore, the universally acknowledged rapidity of change in today’s world is one aspect of the ‘contemporary conditions’ referred to here and having an effect on patterns of language use:

Under contemporary conditions, it seems absolutely necessary for the concept of communicative competence to attend to both the standard and local Englishes, and to tune in to both established and emergent forms and norms of use.(ibid)

Leung has here articulated a major reason for listening to multilingual teachers grappling with local issues on a day-to-day basis. Communicative competence needs to be interpreted according to the emerging local contexts of English use, as described by experts working in those contexts. Nurses and teachers in the Philippines for example, (see data discussion in Chapter 7) would have vastly different communication needs. The ‘native speaker’ model, which Leung sees at the core of the Communicative Language Teaching Model, becomes an even less accurate standard as other needs for English become apparent.

In a world where ‘non-native speakers’ are fast outnumbering the ‘native speakers’ the role of Communicative Competence needs to embrace a wider range of speakers. It would appear that the main concerns about Communicative Competence nowadays are that it is too prescriptive and does not take into account the enormous range of situations where English is currently used.

Reconceptualising it for multicompetent speakers (Cook 1999) in multicultural situations seems to be the recommended next step. Alptekin, reviewing Cook's model, notes the move away from monolingualism:

The pedagogic emphasis has been gradually shifting, however, from reliance on the monolingual native speaker as the source of language authority and expertise to a new understanding of multicompetence that is essentially holistic in nature, thanks to Cook's (1991; 1992; 1999) pioneering efforts. It is appropriate at this point in time, then, to expand Cook's construct so that the bilingual is seen as having both a specific linguistic and cultural configuration of two coexisting and interacting languages and communities, as mentioned earlier. (Alptekin, 2010: 104)

Examining this new role cannot be successfully achieved without considering this 'bilingual' or multilingual view of language use which is prevalent today. In these conditions, multilingual teachers are best qualified to elucidate changing views of Communicative Competence. My data will show to what extent this appears to be happening. Clearly, the emerging view of multilingual individuals with superior linguistic skills is gaining sway.

2.4.1 CLT as an example of a global method

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, I have chosen to focus on CLT as an aspect of ELT methodology embodying attitudes to change because it was the topic deemed most worthy of discussion by my research participants. Having replaced an overly dominant reliance on grammar in language teaching, CLT quickly assumed a major methodological role with its emphasis on the social and communicative aspects of language. The approach worked well for the Western settings for which it was designed but, as locations for English learning and teaching expanded, parallel criticisms to those voiced concerning its theoretical foundations of communicative competence came to be raised.

The growing number of contexts in which English is being taught include a majority where there is little use of English outside the classroom and thus one of the founding assumptions of CLT, that there are communicative opportunities for using the language, is thwarted. The difficulty in successfully adapting the methodology may lie in the preference for the 'weak' version, with its insistence on oral skills and the banning of the first language in the classroom.

The 'strong' and 'weak' versions of CLT have been described by Holliday (1994) and referred to by others, for example, McKay (2002). According to Holliday, the strong version involves understanding how language works while the weak version entails practising language models in the form of structures set within contexts of use:

Whereas in the weak version the term 'communicative' relates more to students communicating with the teacher and with each other to practise the language forms which have been presented, in the strong version, 'communicative' relates more to the way in which the student communicates with the text. By this, I mean that the student puts her or himself in the position of the receiver of the text, in communication with the producer of the text – reconstructing the language strategies used (1994: 170)

Interpreted in this way, the 'strong' approach does not insist on students using only English in the classroom but permits them to use their own language to reconstruct meaning and understand how the text works. Much of the criticism of CLT would seem to stem from the use of the weak version in inappropriate contexts, some of which have been described in McKay (2002). Anderson proposes a reason for the dominance of the weak version:

A possible reason for the popularity of the weak version is that it relates more directly to the 'methods' that preceded it such as the behaviourist influenced audiolingual 'method' as well as structural and direct methods because it shares with them the direct teaching and learning of usage through structures ...using familiar teaching techniques such as teacher gesticulation and elicitation (2002: 58).

My data will provide examples of individual responses to CLT, mainly to the weak version and generally offering evidence of this preoccupation with methods, although, in the contexts discussed, the methods are themselves often unfamiliar and have become fused with notions of CLT.

CLT's relevance was also questioned by Bax in 2003b, when he proposed a Context Approach as an alternative. Although such an approach does not appear to have been officially adopted, Bax's proposal has sparked a great deal of favourable consideration, for example Hu's argument against CLT for China (2005). Bax crowned his arguments against CLT by pointing to the way it ignored context, which he claimed to be an essential aspect of teaching. He provided examples of 'native speaker' teachers being sent abroad armed with CLT, which they were assured would

work anywhere, although this proved not to be the case in practice. I am arguing that knowledge of context is a key strength of multilingual teachers and it emerges as such in my data, nowhere more so than when teachers question CLT - and the contextual knowledge of some 'native speaker' teachers with scant experience.

Kumaravadivelu summarizes the objections raised against CLT in a number of countries, including South Africa, Pakistan, Singapore and India as presenting 'a classic case of a centrally produced pedagogy that is out of sync with local linguistic, sociocultural, and political particularities' (2006b: 172). He proposes a 'parameter of particularity' as a solution: 'At its core, the idea of pedagogic particularity is consistent with the hermeneutic perspective of situational understanding, which claims that a meaningful pedagogy cannot be constructed without a holistic interpretation of particular situations' (ibid: 171). These 'particular situations' are best dealt with by those who have lived in them as shown by the critiques written by researchers in the above list of countries. Pedagogy thus comes back to local considerations as these comments from China illustrate:

English teaching in China is foreign language teaching conducted in a Chinese way, while in the West it is native or second language teaching conducted in a western way. Such different ways of teaching, according to Pennycook (1994), are embedded in social, political, philosophical and cultural differences. (Du 2005: 94)

Viewed in this light, the insistence on earlier versions of CLT, devised in Western countries for students learning in English-speaking contexts, becomes even more difficult to accept, to such an extent that in countries as large as China there is disagreement over its appropriacy. Contesting the opinion put forward by Liao, (2005) supporting CLT, Hu refers to the diversity of teaching contexts in China to justify his recommendation that:

Rather than impose CLT or for that matter any particular methodology on teachers, a more rational and productive stance is to encourage them to adopt an eclectic approach, and draw on various methodological options at their disposal to meet the demands of their specific teaching situations. (2005: 67)

Although the importance of defining Communicative Competence in language teaching can hardly be over-estimated, changes in the global role of English make it imperative that the concept is adjusted to keep pace with these changes. They include a shift in the control of

English use, a concomitant diminution of the role of the ‘native speaker’ and a need to take note of the porous borders between languages and cultures. There is a general understanding that Communicative Competence and CLT remain key terms but there is no longer an overarching definition limiting the applicability of these concepts. Rather, the recommendation seems to be to take into account the range of contexts requiring ‘communication’ and to tailor teaching approaches accordingly. Understanding this range of contexts depends on an awareness of the roles of certain aspects of globalisation and culture.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter has summarised the most important current influences on the development and interpretation of knowledge, particularly for ELT. It has therefore dealt with Globalisation, in its role of defining today’s world, and with Culture, in its contribution to understanding how individuals react to each other around the world. The concepts are interconnected, as was shown, for example, in Pennycook’s discussion of transculturation, where cultural change could be seen to result from Globalisation. Both concepts are necessary to provide a framework for exploring the dominant force in ELT methodology, specifically, CLT, and its theoretical underpinning, communicative competence. Globalisation and Culture clarify how individuals interact in today’s world, with its enhanced opportunities for communicating across borders, making monolingualism almost an anachronism in the language teaching field, while adherence to one centre-based method is an impossibility in the face of exposure to multiple cultures and their educational influences.

Globalisation has permeated the world of English Language Teaching, influencing communication by removing the need to rely on one source of knowledge only. With technological advances, social and political changes are no longer confined to one area of the globe and can therefore be incorporated into teaching programs as they occur, allowing for constant interaction with, and reaction to, events outside the classroom.

Culture is more difficult to define and analyse because it has led to the formulation of ideologies which tend to divide human beings into different types according to their race or nationality. Assigning cultural traits in this way has been seen to lead to cultural fixity but a broader understanding of cultures as exhibiting certain commonalities enables ‘cultural transformation’,

a concept particularly important to language teachers insofar as it involves awareness of the Other alongside the Self.

The role of Communicative Competence in language teaching, as suggested by the writers quoted, needs to be re-conceptualised in the light of these changing global conditions, as barriers to 'native speaker' privilege lose their meaning. The growing irrelevance of the 'native speaker model' as a model for standards of communicative competence has been highlighted in this description of the shifting foundations of ELT methodology, and there will be further reference to this model in the next chapter. The focus, however, will change, as, having established the backdrop of global and cultural influences on ELT methodology, I move to a consideration of those developing the methodology, namely multilingual teachers, as seen in the current literature.

CHAPTER 3 FROM 'PERIPHERY' TO 'EPICENTRE': THE GROWING STRENGTH OF THE MULTILINGUAL TEACHER AS REFLECTED IN THE LITERATURE

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how Globalisation and changing views about Culture provide a background to understanding the global nature of ELT. This chapter presents a redirection of focus; it moves from a consideration of the world inhabited by the multilingual teachers and their response to the content of that world to a detailed analysis of how multilingual teacher identity is being gradually shaped in relation to debates over the Centre/Periphery and native/non-native dichotomies. Notions of identity were seen in Chapter 2 to be difficult to construct due to forces of change. By narrowing the focus to their evolving identity, the present chapter shows how acknowledging change in fact has a beneficial effect on the definition of the multilingual teacher.

One way of achieving this advantage has been through the emergence of a new descriptor from the 'Periphery': the term 'Epicentres' (Pakir 2001) testifies to the growing confidence in what Kachru described as 'the outer circle.' (1985) In fact, Kachru's circles can be seen to define changes which are becoming more pronounced:

In my view, the global diffusion of English has taken an interesting turn: the native speakers of this language seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardization; in fact, if current statistics are any indication, they have become a minority. This sociolinguistic fact must be accepted and its implications recognised. What we need now are new paradigms and new perspectives for linguistic and pedagogical research and for understanding the linguistic creativity in multilingual situations across cultures. (1985: 30)

Twenty-six years later, these words of Kachru carry even more resonance but the 'native speakers' still hold sway in some contexts, although their reliability has been challenged by increasingly confident and aware multilingual speakers. Changing global conditions can be seen to be having such a powerful influence over language use that multilingual situations can no longer be ignored, nor can the views of multilingual teachers.

Firstly in this chapter, I will consider definitions of identity for English language teachers, referring to the 'native speaker' and to local influences. These will lead to an examination of the developing importance of the multilingual speaker as English teacher. Another important feature

will be the diversity of attitudes regarding how to describe preferred varieties of English, as these attitudes are firmly embedded in identity and context. Alongside this focus I will also refer to the importance of context in language teaching, as it is becoming clear that this feature has a strong impact on perceptions of how English should be taught.

An overview of language teacher identity shows a shifting emphasis ‘from ‘native/non-native’ to multilingual emerging in the literature, accompanied by a reconsideration of what the concept ‘native speaker’ means to many ‘non-native’ speakers. My purpose in this chapter, therefore, is to firstly consider the effects of colonialism and imperialism on multilingual teacher identity, which resulted in strong racist undercurrents and the evolution of a ‘Centre/Periphery’ mentality (Phillipson, 1992). In the process, I will summarise current attitudes to defining the multilingual teacher and show how they contrast with previously held beliefs about the ‘native speaker’. The flow of ideas towards a multilingual, inclusive approach to language teaching will then be examined, with emphasis on the growing importance of the local and the importance of understanding diverse attitudes towards ‘Centre’- defined varieties of English.

3.2. Setting the scene: literary evidence

The historical background to ELT is portrayed most successfully by postcolonial writers and exemplified by Sri Lankan novelist, Shyam Selvadurai, who sets the theme of this chapter very aptly in his novel *Cinnamon Gardens*. The narrative follows the fate of a young Sri Lankan woman who believes it will be easy for her to obtain a position as a teacher in colonial Ceylon, until one of her friends disabuses her:

‘What do you suppose my chances might be of becoming a headmistress some day?’ She looked at her friend for support and now saw the reservation on her face. They had reached a clump of araliya trees and Nancy stopped in the shade. She was silent, looking down at her hands. ‘I do applaud your ambition Annalukshmi, and I think that you would make an excellent headmistress. But I think you are forgetting how things are. Being Ceylonese, neither you nor I will get a chance to be headmistress’. (2000: 260)

The parallels between fiction and lived experience are striking. In his development of the above scene, Selvadurai uses the image of a spool of thread unravelling in Annalukshmi’s mind as she gradually awakens to the idea that she is not, after all going to be accepted as an equal to the white headmistress:

She suddenly remembered Miss Lawton's reply when she had said that she did not know very much about the assistant headmistress's job. Miss Lawton had replied, 'Well, of course I wouldn't expect you to do all of it. That would be beyond you.' (ibid: 261)

It is by drawing these parallels that it becomes possible to reinforce the power of the message of injustice and inequality that has been voiced by so many. To increase the weight of the message, we can turn to a literary giant of the stature of E.M. Forster who, in *A Passage to India* makes delicious use of irony to describe the position of British authorities in India:

A community that bows the knee to a viceroy and believes that the divinity that hedges a king can be transplanted must feel reverence for any viceregal substitute. At Chandrapore the Turtons were little gods; soon they would retire to some suburban villa and die exiled from glory. (1924: 49-50)

Thus the British in India are perceived by Forster to occupy positions they do not deserve, particularly the rather unpleasant Turton couple, who embody the stereotype of the colonial rulers. Comparisons of this kind between novelists and researchers can be exploited to reveal more emphatically the phenomenon under investigation. Forster incorporates into his novel the same issues raised by Phillipson, Pennycook and others in their discussions of English and the discourses of colonialism. Furthermore, Forster's vision is acknowledged by Said, in his *Orientalism*, referring to the 'disappointing conclusion' to *A Passage to India*, when Aziz and Fielding fail to be reconciled. Said observes that the novel confirms 'a sense of the pathetic distance still separating "us" from an Orient destined to bear its foreignness as a mark of its permanent estrangement from the West.' (1979: 244) This rather pessimistic view is to some extent compounded by the effects of the World Trade Centre attack of 11/9/2001 ('9/11') as evidenced by Holliday's discussion of 'cultural continuity' (2005b: 163). He quotes from email informants who speak of reduced cultural continuity and 'a perception that links native speakers of English with a new race of undesirable imperialists' suggesting that the messages of history are being ignored. There is also a degree of optimism in the field, though, if writers such as Spivak are considered. Writing about women translators, she observes:

In the old days, it was most important for a colonial or postcolonial student of English to be as 'indistinguishable' as possible from the native speaker of English. I think it is necessary for people in the third world translation trade now to accept that

the wheel has come around, and that the genuinely bilingual postcolonial now has a bit of an advantage. (Spivak, 2009: 210)

Such a view, one hopes, would allow more scope to the Annalukshmis of today, whose linguistic and cultural knowledge are seen to greater advantage. With this kind of awareness, it may be possible to counteract the negative trend described by Holliday by interacting more closely with representatives of local sites in order to understand what separates and/or unites ‘Us’ and ‘Them’.

All of the above illustrate how connections can be forged across a range of discourses. Added value is credited by van Manen to literary and artistic comparisons in human science research after he asserts that ‘human science strives for precision and exactness by aiming for interpretive descriptions that exact fullness and completeness of detail, and that explore to a degree of perfection the fundamental nature of the notion being addressed in the text’ (1990: 17). Van Manen’s words here highlight the dedication of the artist striving to represent the world with a clarity that justifies reference to works of art in academic research. In the examples discussed above there is a clear portrayal of phenomena that cannot be ignored because they have been described with the vision of the novelist, who has seen in the incidents something that needs to be brought to the attention of readers.

3.3. Identity for language teachers

Kumaravadivelu defines the ‘core’ of identity as the relationship between the individual and the community, and how the individual navigates self and society’ (2008a: 143). He goes on to contrast modern with postmodern and postcolonial views. For him the modernist, European concept of identity meant that ‘the individual’s identity was tied almost inextricably to affiliation to family and community. While some manoeuvring was indeed possible, individuals encountered an essentialised and totalized concept of identity within which they had to find personal meaning’ (ibid). In contrast, he continues, ‘postmodern identity may be considered constructivist. That is to say, postmodernism treats identity as something that is actively constructed on an ongoing basis.’ (ibid) Furthermore, the notion of difference is important in the postmodern view of identity. This means that, firstly, ‘identity can only be understood in a meaningful way by understanding others and by recognising and highlighting one’s difference in relation to others.’ (ibid: 145) Secondly, there is less emphasis on fixity, (in line with definitions

of culture) and more on fluidity, similar to the postcolonial view, which looks beyond the colonial view of Self and Other to an argument that ‘the Other identity is imposed by hegemonic power structures.’ (ibid) At the same time, not only is Identity defined by the West, in addition certain aspects are claimed as being Western rather than universal. Holliday’s summary of the non-essentialist view of modernity, that ‘There is no reason why someone with a non-Western cultural background should not adopt behaviour which might appear to be Western, because there are underlying universal processes which underpin such behaviour’ (2011: 106) , in contrast to the essentialist view which claims that only Westerners can be modern, shows how non-Westerners can be denied any qualities associated with modernity pertaining to their own culture. Being ‘modern’ in the everyday sense of being up-to-date and aware of the latest trends and developments in society, is not considered an attribute of non-Westerners. Examples produced by Holliday’s interviewees (2011) , whose beliefs about their identities defy stereotyping, show this assumption to be inappropriate and prove that non-Westerners are as ‘modern’ in outlook as Westerners.

Identity can be viewed from many angles and, for multilingual teachers, the most important facets to consider concern culture, language, nationality and context, which themselves involve a range of much discussed dichotomies, including Centre/Periphery, self/other and native/non-native. Within these terms there also exist a number of ‘-isms’, such as postcolonialism, imperialism, racism, linguicism, native-speakerism, all of which have played their part in unequal distributions of power and destruction of self-image.

3.3.1 ‘Native’ vs. ‘non-native’ speakers

The complex nature of English language teacher identity demands an investigation of a variety of concepts and ideologies. Many prominent researchers have exposed the concept of ‘native speaker’ as a fallacy, citing the inconsistency and illogicality embodied by the term. The fallacy they describe refers not so much to the definition of native speakers but to the professional superiority conferred on those who fit the term. The following subsections will reveal the doubtful credibility of this superiority arguing firstly that linguistic knowledge is a more reliable criteria for judging expertise (although it is of course only one of many important criteria, cf. Borg 2003). Secondly, the damage inflicted by the ideology will be summarised, and finally,

examples from current research will be provided to show how a fallacy claimed to result from colonial attitudes is being undermined.

Embedded in this dichotomy are others of increasingly dubious reputation, such as ‘Centre/Periphery’, which will also be alluded to. The analysis will be supported by a summary of the research around some of the more prevalent attitudes to the ‘native speaker’. Definitions of the native speaker abound in the literature (eg. Rampton, 1990; Davies, 2003; Cook, 1999; Medgyes, 1992), and they can be reduced to these basic facts:

The indisputable element in the definition of native speaker is that a person is a native speaker of the language learnt first; the other characteristics are incidental, describing how well an individual uses the language. Someone who did not learn a language in childhood cannot be a native speaker of the language. Later-learnt languages can never be native languages, by definition. (Cook, 1999: 187)

The dispute, then, is not with the facts but with the superiority they have been allowed to confer. The extent to which this ideology is entrenched in the profession is forcefully driven home by these words from Nayar:

The continuing extension of the power of the native English speaker even into the field of publishing is clearly demonstrated by the instructions in the style sheet and submission guidelines I am currently writing this under, which urges those who are not native speakers of English to have their texts checked by a native speaker. A less discomfiting way would have been to say: “If you are not confident of your English language competence, please consult someone who is.” (2002: 80)

This concept of ‘the power of the native English speaker’ has been largely denounced as a fallacy by a number of scholars, most notably, Phillipson (1992) and Canagarajah (1999b). Conversely, definitions of the ‘non-native speaker’ are equally problematic. In a review of Davies’ work on the ‘native speaker’, and after referring to Cook’s preference for defining language learners as L2 users rather than successful native speakers, Han suggests that the ‘non-native’ speaker is mostly defined only by reference to the ‘native’ speaker:

This emphasis on successful L2 users rather than native speakers as models for L2 learning brings to mind Davies’ definition of the native speaker, namely, to be a native speaker means not to be a nonnative speaker, so much so that one is tempted to allow for its antithesis to serve as a definition of the L2 user, that is, that to be an L2 user means not to be a native speaker. (Han, 2004: 184)

This somewhat tortured reasoning defines the majority of English speakers in the world according to a default, an anomalous conclusion. A comprehensive survey of definitions and opinions about the dichotomy was published by Moussu and Llorca (2008). They argue further for the superficiality of the dichotomy with their observation that not all non-native speakers are the same:

These two categories fail to reflect the real conditions and level of command of a language by a given speaker, and are sometimes misleading in suggesting that one group of speakers has a superior capacity to communicate efficiently and intelligibly than the other. Given the arguments against the existence of such a categorization, as well as the well-attested differences among language users, it would be wise to deal with them with extreme caution (2008: 319).

Removing the definitions altogether might be an appropriate step, especially in view of the fact that ‘native’ speakers represent an extremely broad range of linguistic variables (Leung, 2005). A similar opinion was expressed by Kamhi-Stein in a summary of research on ‘NNES educators’ where she advocated:

... not treating NES and NNES educators as having absolute characteristics and ... taking into account potential individual differences among NES and NNES educators with respect to their language proficiency, professional preparation, and the settings in which they teach (2005: 82).

Emphasising these professional features also encompasses context (‘settings’) which is referred to throughout this thesis as gathering importance in all aspects of ELT.

Another powerful reason for the banishment of the dichotomy was advanced by Higgins:

In fact, it may be more helpful to avoid the use of the terms NS and NNS altogether in reference to English speakers because of the problematic assumption that (standard) inner-circle varieties are the only legitimate, and hence de facto, target varieties for outer-circle or expanding circlespeakers. (2003: 619)

She argued that there are a number of varieties of English which may legitimately claim to have ‘native speakers’ but which are not recognised as valid.

Because it has become widely accepted that speakers in the outer circle have altered English by indigenizing and institutionalizing it, we should recognize that speakers of these Englishes are now following their own native (i.e., locally relevant) norms. The term native here does not refer to British or American varieties but to varieties such as Filipino, Malaysian, and Indian English. (ibid: 617-618)

With this level of variation the whole concept of native speakerness seems to be becoming meaningless. Nonetheless, the term has managed to retain a strong hold over the imaginations of English speakers and teachers, for a range of historical and cultural reasons, which will now be summarised.

3.3.1. Exposing the fallacy

The native/non-native speaker dichotomy has insinuated itself into definitions of identity through a postcolonial retention of privilege highlighted by researchers such as Pennycook (1994; 2001a; 2007 and elsewhere) in their explorations of issues raised in Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992). Phillipson describes these issues as 'fallacies', notably the 'monolingual fallacy' and the 'native speaker fallacy.' Beginning with the 'monolingual fallacy', he alludes to its colonial origins, asserting that 'A monolingual methodology is organically linked with linguistic disregard of dominated languages, concepts, and ways of thinking. It is highly functional in inducing a colonized consciousness' (1992: 187). Consequently, power is retained by the 'Centre':

The tenets of ELT have ideological and structural consequences. They serve to strengthen the hold of the Centre over the Periphery. The monolingual tenet has the effect of strengthening the case for Centre pedagogy and norms for the language. It paves the way for the second tenet, which posits that the ideal teacher of English is a native speaker. The monolingual tenet also has economic consequences. ... It creates jobs for the Centre and for those in the Periphery who have acquired credentials verifying proficiency in the language of the centre. This professional structure also links up with economic imperialism: it permits the marketing worldwide of monolingual textbooks emanating from the Centre, which in turn reinforces anglocentricity and the hold of ELT professionalism. (ibid: 193)

Since this condemnation of a monolingual approach was written, there have been further protests by strong voices from former 'Periphery' members such as Canagarajah (1999a; 1999b) who have queried monolingualism in similar terms. Throughout his work, Canagarajah has made frequent reference to Phillipson; for example, in *Resisting Imperialism in English Teaching*

(1999b) he repeats Phillipson's claim about 'economic imperialism', ensuring the dominance of Centre-produced textbooks and Centre-trained, native speaker teachers, who, by implication, are superior to local teachers. (1999b: 126). This is due to the complementary fallacy in Phillipson's list: the 'native-speaker fallacy', which asserts that native speakers of a language are the best teachers of that language. This is obviously a fallacy because any of the 'virtues' listed as belonging to the native speaker can be acquired by non-native speakers. (1992: 194-5). Furthermore, observes Phillipson, 'It is ... arguable, as a general principle, that non-native teachers may in fact be better qualified than native speakers, if they have gone through the laborious process of acquiring English as a second language and if they have insight into the linguistic and cultural needs of their learners.' (ibid) This is an important observation for the current study, which aims to show how the backgrounds of 'non-native' teachers influence their professionalism by providing evidence from the teachers themselves of the 'laborious process' they have submitted to in order to achieve their goals.

Canagarajah, in another highly relevant article, 'Interrogating the native speaker fallacy' supports this point of view:

Language teaching is an art, a science and a skill that requires complex pedagogical preparation and practice. Therefore, not all speakers may make good teachers of their first language. On the other hand, it is possible to make a case that speakers with multilingual competence, even in a situation where the language is a foreign or second language, may make successful language teachers. Their proficiency in more than one language system develops a deep metalinguistic knowledge and complex language awareness. (1999a: 80)

Another important aspect of the fallacy is clarified here. Granting unconditional superiority to 'native speakers' denies recognition of the knowledge acquired through making the effort to learn another language, surely a key requirement for becoming a successful language teacher. 'Speakers with multilingual competence' may be 'native' or 'non-native' speakers but what is more important for their success as language teachers is their knowledge of linguistic processes acquired through learning other languages than their own.

Canagarajah goes on to point out that not only are multilingual speakers ignored due the native speaker fallacy, but their self-esteem is also severely undermined:

The legitimization of Center norms and competencies through the native speaker fallacy ... makes periphery teachers look up to the centre for professional advancement and assistance. This has serious implications for their professional identity. Their autonomy as a discourse community is also affected. (1999a: 86)

Kumaravadivelu has defined this process as ‘self-marginalization’:

The practice of self-marginalization refers to the ways in which the periphery surrenders its voice and vision to the center. That is, members of the dominated group, knowingly or unknowingly, legitimize the characteristics of inferiority attributed to them by the dominating group By their uncritical acceptance of the native speaker dominance, non-native professionals legitimize their own marginalization. Both the process of marginalization and the practice of self-marginalization bring to the fore the coloniality, rather than the globality, of the English language. They cast a long, hegemonic shadow over the activity of TESOL. (2006b: 219)

The danger here lies in the ‘unknowing’ legitimization of native speaker dominance; recognising the phenomenon is a major step towards dealing with it. Similarly, other researchers have made the point that nativespeakerhood is not the most important factor in English teacher identity, for example:

Whereas previous studies of teacher identity in TESOL have focused primarily on the dichotomy between native- and nonnative-English-speaking teachers, this article argues that the profession needs to put more value on the pedagogical resources that transnational and intercultural teachers bring to English language teaching. (Menard-Warwick, 2008: 617).

Menard-Warwick goes on to argue, after analysing the intercultural knowledge and experiences of her two research participants, Paloma and Ruby:

... these sorts of identity resources have been little addressed in the TESOL literature, which has tended to dichotomize teacher identity as either NEST or NNEST, a dichotomy that doesn’t address the kinds of resources that intercultural teachers like Paloma and Ruby bring to their teaching. In sharing their personal histories of understanding and adapting to multiple cultural frameworks and thus modeling intercultural identities, they can open up identity options not previously imagined by their students (Morgan, 2004; Weisman, 2001). (ibid: 635)

Menard-Warwick’s study differs from mine because she investigated teachers who had spent time working in other contexts than their own and who could therefore be considered ‘bi-

cultural.’ It is thus an illustration of the extraordinary diversity of contexts in which teachers of English operate and, in addition, of the growing awareness of the value of intercultural knowledge. The ‘personal histories’ of Menard-Warwick’s teachers contain evidence of ‘significant intercultural experiences’ which do not constitute a major part of the stories of my participants, who were selected for their expertise in teaching English in their own contexts. Nonetheless, all these stories point to one critical feature, namely that classifying teachers as ‘native’ or ‘non-native’ seriously impairs any progress in understanding the value of their skills because it ignores the richness of experience contributing to these skills.

Referring to the negative influences of native-speakerism, which he defines as ‘the chauvinistic belief that ‘native-speakers’ represent a ‘Western culture’ from which spring the ideals both of the language and of language teaching methodology (2006: 49) Holliday adds strong support to Menard-Warwick’s findings. He strengthens his analysis of native speakerism with comments from a range of TESOL practitioners, for example ‘Mona’ from Pakistan, who asserts:

Native speakers are valued but are not considered ‘custodians’ of English language instruction and the teaching approaches that they bring to Pakistan are welcomed but not followed blindly. Non-native speakers who are able to adapt such ‘best practices’ to the context in Pakistan are highly favoured. (2005b: 14)

Mona, and others like her, was able to provide direct evidence of the ideological changes afoot, indicating a growing confidence in the importance of understanding local contexts and practices. This shift in favour of local knowledge is valuable for encouraging the abandonment of Kumaravadivelu’s concept of ‘self-marginalization’ (op.cit.).

3.3.2 Acquiring a voice

Another indication of progress is found in the uphill struggle for multilingual writers to acquire voice in academic discourse. Outlining this struggle, Canagarajah has expressed optimism (and a hint of irony) for the more social orientation underlying research into ‘ESL learners’:

As a former ESL student, I am personally encouraged by this ‘social turn’ in applied linguistics. After being treated as nonentities in SLA research and feeling silenced, we ESL students have now achieved complexity, with researchers straining their ears to catch every inflection and modulation of our ‘voice’. (2004a: 266)

Defining ‘voice’ as ‘a manifestation of one’s agency in discourse through the means of language’, (ibid: 267) he claims that there are three constructs, ‘identity, role and subjectivity’ which can be negotiated through voice:

... it is at the level of voice that we gain agency to negotiate these categories of the self, adopt a reflexive awareness of them, and find forms of coherence and power that suit our interests. Related to this exercise of agency is the fact that, while the three other constructs are largely macro-social (experienced at the level of history, society and ideology respectively), voice manifests itself in micro-social contexts of personal communication. It is at the micro-social level of everyday life and linguistic interactions that one is able to resist, modify, or negotiate the larger social structures. (ibid: 268)

The approach adopted by Canagarajah in his analysis of multilingual writers is equally enlightening when considering multilingual teachers. They also have to ‘find forms of coherence and power’ and can be seen to negotiate the ‘larger social structures’ at a micro-social level. Their accounts of their everyday lives do in fact demonstrate ‘resistance, modification and negotiation’ and the growing awareness of these processes brings into sharper focus the formerly unrecognised complexity surrounding linguistic interaction. How multilingual teachers construct a professional voice for themselves is explained through memories of learning English, experiences of using it and approaches to teaching it described in this thesis. Their ‘exercise of agency’ revealed through these activities is integral to their construction of voice, which, in Canagarajah’s terms, determines independence of expression.

3.3.3 Increased confidence among multilingual teachers

Acquiring a voice can be linked to increased confidence among teachers who were formerly marginalised because of language or location. Holliday reports the views of a number of professionals who express a new level of confidence with the way they teach, and with how they see teachers developing:

Competent non-native teachers and teacher educators who are also proficient in the language (whatever the variety of English they may be using) are beginning to question the relevance of the ideas imported from the centre. At the same time they are beginning to develop knowledge, skills and experiences to adapt the ideas they have often learnt at universities in the English-speaking West. More importantly,

their skills and competence is also gaining recognition (email interview). (2005b: 14)

More details about the ‘skills and competence’ of multilingual teachers in fact emerge in the conversations I report, which have allowed me to explore the various background influences on the evolution of strengths in the various contexts. There is, it seems, a process of blending knowledge from different sources that is integral to teacher cognition. In the case of teachers working in diverse contexts who have studied abroad, professional knowledge is enriched by the opportunity to stand back and view their own environment from a more distant vantage point. They can then apply this knowledge with the skill and confidence needed.

These shifts enable those formerly classed as the inferior ‘them’ to take on more of the characteristics of the formerly superior ‘us’; equally and contemporaneously, ‘we’ become aware of ‘our’ parochial and stereotypical attitudes, and become more inclusive in our thinking. Without this awareness, the lingering effects of colonialism are likely to disadvantage an emerging global profession, perpetuating the scene described by Selvadurai at the beginning of this chapter, which typifies the colonialist legacy. A more optimistic note has been sounded by Rajagopalan, himself a stern critic of colonial inroads into cultural identities:

... thanks to the important work of scholars such as Phillipson, Pennycook and several others, there has been a growing awareness among EFL professionals all over the world of the ideological implications of the very enterprise they have been engaged in. Far from being an innocent theoretical reference point in language teaching, the figure of the native speaker is increasingly being seen today as a figure shot through with ideological, indeed, often racist, connotations. And, with more and more people becoming aware of the ideological use of the concept, the native speaker is no longer the cynosure of all eyes but is on the road to steady decline. (2005: 289)

Rajagopalan here indicates the progress which has been made in terms of understanding who teaches English and in so doing, highlights the diminishing importance of native-speakerness as a required attribute of the English teacher’s identity, an important consideration for my study of multilingual teachers in local settings. His evaluation is reflected in the research of Menard-Warwick (2008). Menard-Warwick’s findings, alongside Rajagopalan’s comments, indicate a groundswell of support for removing this dichotomy from all considerations of what constitutes expertise in teaching, although, as will be seen below, the ‘native speaker’ is not yet dead.

3.3.4 Evaluating some ‘native speaker’ attitudes and ideologies

There is still some evidence, though, that the decline of the ‘native speaker’ image is not as rapid as some would like to see. In contrast to Rajagopalan, Holliday sees the field as still tainted by this division:

Very recently I have arrived at the conclusion that the most important feature of this TESOL culture is a long-standing division between ‘non-native’ speakers and ‘native speakers’ which, following the work of Phillipson (1992), Pennycook (for example, 1994, 1998), Canagarajah (1999) and Kubota (1999, 2001, 2002) is irrevocably coloured by issues not only of imperialism, but also of how the ‘native speaker’ Self finds the ‘culture’ of the ‘non-native speaker’ Other problematic and in need of correction (2006: 48)

This continuing debate regarding ‘us and them’ is also found in Waters who introduces the Western concept of Political Correctness (PC):

PC, as already mentioned, characteristically sees the world as being made up of ‘oppressors’ and ‘victims’. Individuals are therefore regarded as belonging wholesale to one category or the other. Thus... the PC-based stance tends to construct NNSs in the opposite terms, forming them into a ‘victim’ class about whom generalizations are just as freely made (Waters, 2007a: 358).

Regarding ‘native speaker’ attitudes, the introduction of notions of PC explains how ‘non-native speaker’ teachers can be inappropriately positioned by ‘native speakers’ and how this may lead to a misplaced need to compensate the former:

... people can feel victims, rather than beneficiaries, of the so-called ‘liberation’ which the West brings them. This is an easy trap for well-intentioned English-speaking Western educators to fall into. (Holliday, 2007b: 364)

The influence of PC can, with these ‘good intentions’, lead to an over-zealous desire to protect the Other, who may not be in need of protection:

Ironically, the hegemonic political correctness which Waters critiques may be more deeply rooted in English-speaking Western ELT’s established desire to ‘liberate’ ‘non-native speakers’ who do not need liberating, than in acting against chauvinistic attitudes towards them. (Holliday, 2007: 360)

The link between Political Correctness and this missionary approach will be further explored below, where the pitfalls of this predominantly Western ‘feel-good’ attitude are evaluated further. Put briefly, it seems that the doctrine of PC results in those who occupy positions of power being moved to adopt magnanimous attitudes to those they perceive to be disadvantaged, that is, ‘non-native speakers’. In addition to the situations discussed by Holliday and Waters, it is possible that western teachers are motivated by PC in the formulation of attitudes towards ‘non-native speaker’ teachers.

3.3.5 Opinions expressed by ‘native speaker’ teachers

Teachers have also been asked to describe their attitudes to ‘non-native’ speakers in a variety of contexts. Both Nemtchinova (2006) and Aboshiha (2008) have examined the phenomenon of native speakerism as seen by teachers. In a survey of host teachers supervising trainees from thirteen countries, Nemtchinova found that, far from being a disadvantage to teaching English,

Among the numerous positive attributes that NNES trainees bring to their teaching are their conscious knowledge of grammar, their ability to understand the challenges that second language students are facing, their empathy for their students, their cross-cultural experience, and their ability to serve as excellent role models. (2006: 256)

This summary regarding supervising teachers is at variance with Aboshiha’s conclusion on the attitudes of local, ‘native speaker’ teachers in her research:

The ‘native speaker’ teachers in the group also appeared not to value the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher in any seriously meaningful way, or agree with, or entertain the idea of any increased future importance of their ‘non-native speaker’ counterparts. In fact the ‘native speaker’ teacher is seen to rely on a discursively constructed ‘difference’ to the ‘non-native speaker’ teacher in order to support a currently superior professional identity. (2008: 151)

This finding indicates a perceptible rift between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speaker teachers which will be further examined in the data analysis chapters, as it crosses the boundaries of identity and culture which define members of the profession. It is possible to conjecture that the difference between Aboshiha’s and Nemtchinova’s findings results from the different relationships between the various groups. Nemtchinova’s teachers were supervising ‘non-native’ teacher trainees while Aboshiha’s teachers were referring to colleagues. One of the causes of this attitude may be a

‘feel-good’ factor or what Holliday calls ‘The morality of helping’ (2011), a notion closely allied to and perhaps dependent on, Political Correctness. Holliday gives a variety of examples of the ‘Other’ being ‘helped’ by the West in the ‘belief that the ‘Other’ is being “civilized” educated and improved through its contact with the West’ (2011: 79). Similarly, ‘native speaker’ English teachers may well feel they are able to help the ‘non-native’ teacher ‘Other’ but not to the point where this ‘Other’ will attain the same level of knowledge, and consequently become a threat. The supervising teachers, already in a position of power, can afford to be generous to the ‘non-natives’ under their control but the ‘native speaker’ teachers may feel uncomfortable about losing power. Although there is a great deal of evidence for this claim, in the current study it remains a suggestion awaiting further substantiation.

3.3.6 Opinions expressed by ‘non-native speaker’ teachers

Multilingual teachers themselves have also reflected upon how their identities have evolved. Accounts of their experiences are found in collections such as Braine’s (1999; 2005), Llurda’s (2005) and Mantero’s (2007). These accounts provide evidence which supports most features of the above discussion. Identity and Second Language learning (ed. Mantero, 2007) contains a range of reflective articles and case studies by teachers and researchers working in different contexts around the world and focusing on their identities in these positions. Two particularly relevant articles are Li’s ‘Identity puzzles: am I a course instructor or a non-native speaker?’ and Liggett’s ‘The alchemy of identity’.

Li’s article explores her dual identities as a ‘non-native speaker’ graduate student and a university teacher of TESOL teacher trainees. She discusses the relationship of linguistic and cultural identity and the challenges faced by multilingual teachers who are perceived by their students as outsiders. She delineates a sharp contrast between her dual identities, referring to the comfort of her position as an international graduate student in Canada:

It was a comfortable feeling sitting in the same class with people of different colours, speaking different Englishes. I started to appreciate Cook’s (1992) idea that ‘the L2 learner is not becoming an imitation native speaker; but a person who can stand between the two languages using both when appropriate...[and standing] between two cultures seeing both...in a new light’(583-584). In this ‘evolutionary process’ (Li and Girvan, 2004, p.3) of self-recognition, I started to reconstruct a new identity and enjoyed the dynamic classroom interculture we created together. (2007: 29-30)

This comfort turns to acute discomfort and unease, however, when Li considers her other identity, that of a tutor in the writing centre, where both local and international students seem to be sometimes mistrustful of her abilities. Li works through her doubts and uncertainties, eventually arriving at the realization that

I can never use English as purely as native-speakers. I am going to live with this reality instead of feeling sorry for myself. In other words, I am going to celebrate my multi-competence in using both languages, and particularly, my additional language to fulfil the tasks in daily life and in professional development. (2007: 37)

The author highlights the richness of experience that bi- and multilingual teachers offer to the profession and calls for a change of ideology to celebrate the skills of multicompetent teachers. Calling for ‘ideological changes about the fallacy of native and nonnative speaker distinctions’, Li quotes Skutnabb-Kangas’ suggestion that ESL teachers need to ‘eradicate monolingualism among themselves’ after wondering how it is that a country like Britain which fails to encourage multilingualism can call itself an expert in teaching languages. (2007: 40-41) Elsewhere, her reference to the docile critical scholar (2007: 38-9), challenges notions of western academic freedom, given that students are trained to be critical only in certain ways and are taught to follow a set formula in their ‘critical thinking’. She thus illustrates the dominance of the periphery by the centre, in its insistence on specific approaches to academic reasoning.

Also in Mantero’s 2007 collection, Liggett, Chapter 4, analyses how new ESOL teachers view race. She comments on the minimization of race in the ESL classroom, noting how teachers prefer to ignore issues of colour and concluding with some important recommendations for ESOL teacher education:

Another essential element in a new conceptualization of ESOL teacher education includes incorporating knowledge about notions of race in society and institutions of schooling that have contributed to the categorizing of ESOL students as other. Such an incorporation would allow for inquiry into social stratification. (2007: 61)

A pertinent observation by Inbar-Lourie, in the same collection, neatly summarizes aspects of the native/non-native debate, revealing an awareness of the native-speakerist tendencies analysed by Holliday (2005b and elsewhere):

Since being a native English speaker entails access to valuable assets, the warding off of pseudo native speakers by proclaimed native speakers can be interpreted as the

guarding of potentially valuable resources by privileged native speakers. One may assume, however, that with the massive spread of English currently accepted norms of native speaker status will be revisited and perhaps revised to include populations presently excluded from the native speaker speech community. (Inbar-Lourie, 2005: 278)

Comments of this nature from practising multilingual teachers reflect the same awareness described by theorists such as Bhabha, who observes:

The object of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and destruction. (1994: 101)

Likewise, it may be inferred, the ‘non-native speaker’ is a ‘degenerate’ type who must not, under any conditions, be admitted to the ranks of the privileged. The ‘native-speaker’ English teacher’s protection of their domain may be seen as a parallel to Bhabha’s ‘justification’ of racism as protecting the superiority of the colonists as foreshadowed by Selvadurai’s depiction of colonialism at the beginning of this chapter.

3.3.7 Acknowledging racism in TESOL

Racism is of course a global issue, operating across all spheres of human endeavour. Within TESOL, it has been extensively discussed by Kubota and Lin who state that it is under-researched in TESOL:

The idea of race, racialization, and racism are inescapable topics that arise in the contact zones created by teaching English worldwide and thus are valid topics to explore in the field. Nonetheless, unlike our peer fields such as anthropology, education, and sociology, the field of TESOL has not sufficiently addressed the idea of race and related concepts (2006: 471).

Kubota’s discussion of racism and critical multiculturalism also influences the understanding of ‘native/non-native speaker’ dichotomies and identity construction:

...it is important to understand that images of the Other and Self are neither natural nor neutral but are discursively constructed and are influenced by, and reinforce binary thinking within, unequal relations of power. The effort to understand the Other in relation to the Self or to allow the Other to express their authentic voice in educational settings includes good intentions. However, it often imposes an essentialized, idealized, or stigmatized identity onto the Other as documented by ethnographic research. (2004: 45)

Examples of this ‘stigmatized identity’ have already been noted in consideration of ‘native speaker’ attitudes. One of the most dangerous ideological implications of the ‘non-native’ speaker definition is pointed out by Holliday and Aboshiha (2009):

On the one hand, many so-called ‘nonnative speakers’ may be considered White and may therefore pass as ‘native speakers’ (Connor as cited in Kubota et al., 2005) and, on the other hand, racism may no longer be associated with colour, now recognised as an indefinable notion, but with any Other group which is imagined to be deficient. (Delanty, Jones, & Wodak, 2008, cited in Holliday & Aboshiha, 2009: 670)

Thus the notion of race, superimposed over native speakerism, strengthens an ideology founded on difference.

Racism in TESOL may be defined as a contradictory phenomenon; in a profession which aims to operate in the same way all around the world it could be expected that race was an irrelevancy. Given that its very nature involves teaching English to speakers of ‘Other’ languages, according to one of its many disputed titles, it could be argued that ‘difference’, whether linguistic, cultural or racial, or is a *sine qua non* to the successful operation of the profession. Nevertheless, as the quote from Shin, above, indicates, there are many easily adopted disguises and assuming superior cultural or linguistic knowledge may lead some individuals to wrest power from others whose knowledge may be more broadly based. Racism, indeed, is connected to a desire for power because the racist is able to justify their superiority through membership of a ‘superior’ race.

Allied to racism is the concept of ‘Linguicism’, defined by Phillipson as involving ‘representation of the dominant language, to which desirable characteristics are attributed, for purposes of inclusion, and the opposite for dominated languages, for purposes of exclusion’ (1992: 55) played a part in the evolution of Linguistic Imperialism, and the connection is easily made. Central to this connection is the domination of other languages by English, alongside an unequal allocation of resources to the dominant language and this was an important issue raised by Phillipson. However, subsequent researchers have shown that the dominance of English is not clear-cut and critics of Phillipson have called for a closer look at the appropriation of English in the so-called Periphery. Canagarajah, for example, suggests that ‘The same historical conditions [which favoured linguistic imperialism] generated a significant tradition towards the resistance

and appropriation of English which is currently finding fresh impetus in postcolonial communities' (1999b: 77). It is the 'resistance and appropriation of English' which this study sets out to clarify by listening to those who are, consciously or unconsciously, performing these actions.

3.4. Views from the 'Periphery': the power of local contexts

Identity, both personal and professional, is influenced by context. A knowledge of context implies a knowledge of the local; as described in Canagarajah's words, it involves knowing about 'the day-to-day life of communities in the periphery' which, from the trajectory of teachers' lives, constitutes my research. In his critique of Phillipson, Canagarajah points to the latter's lack of engagement with 'micro-societal issues of domination' since Phillipson had apparently gathered data from Western experts. Hence, 'A more troubling question is, how can one find out about linguistic imperialism in the periphery from the very personnel and agencies from the centre who implement this domination?' (1999b: 43) Canagarajah would have found Phillipson's data more acceptable if it had been gathered from 'Periphery' rather than 'Centre', witnesses. There is an implied lack of knowledge in this area which my research is seeking to redress by involving local rather than 'Centre' voices of authority.

The notion of the local has become an increasingly significant focus across the social sciences, to a large extent as a reaction to what has been seen as broad, ungrounded theorizing throughout much of the 20th century. Rather than talk about human nature, universal cognition, or language structure, the focus has shifted towards the local, the grounded, the particular. (Pennycook, 2010: 1)

To this general justification for considering the local may be added a range of reasons to support the relevance of local contexts for English Language teaching. Canagarajah (2005) provides an overview of local /global issues which informs the approach developed in the current study, observing, '... the context from which we speak shapes the knowledge we produce' (2005: 14). He develops this notion by positing 'deconstructive' and 'reconstructive' projects. For him, the 'deconstructive' aspect means that

Appreciating the rationale and validity of dominant constructs [e.g. Western] in their contexts of origins, we are able to translate with greater awareness the features that are useful in other localities. Thus, this involves a reconstructive activity as well. We must interpret established knowledge for local needs and interests. ...

Reconstructing local knowledge for contemporary needs – Any knowledge construct has to be constantly reinterpreted to speak to current conditions. ...We should not underestimate local knowledge to be of relevance only for local needs. However, this reinterpretation is effective when it is accompanied by a deconstructive project as well. We have to critique traditional knowledge to unravel the limiting influences from feudal, caste, religious and other chauvinistic contexts of production. (Canagarajah, 2005: 14)

These words present a balanced view of local knowledge in that they remove the tendency to idealize or romanticize, with their reminder of ‘chauvinistic contexts of production’, contributing to the acknowledgment that aspects of the local require just as much revision as superimposed global attitudes. The concepts of ‘deconstructive’ and ‘reconstructive’ activities show that the local and the global are not mutually exclusive, but constantly reinforce each other with the contributions they are able to make in given contexts.

Elsewhere, Canagarajah has alluded to the power of the local, especially in his own experience:

...people have been teaching languages quite successfully even in pre-modern communities from pre-scientific times. These are the teachers still working in the remote corners of the world in small village classrooms often meeting under trees in farms and fields away from the eyes of the professional pundits of the centre. The ‘English teachers’ are village elders, parents and priests who may often possess only a smattering of English. Some of them don’t have any advanced professional training (other than a post-high school training). I am not ashamed to say that it is such a charismatic rural teacher in Sri Lanka who initiated my own learning of the language which has sustained me to this point of earning a doctorate in English linguistics and serving in the faculty of an English department. (2004: 140-141)

These aspects of local learning and teaching are seldom valued, yet they often provide a solid foundation for the acquisition of knowledge. Early learning experiences, moreover, are acknowledged to be important for the development of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003).

In his discussion of the limits of method for teaching purposes, Kumaravadivelu makes the point that focusing on method has led to local knowledge being ignored, in a strong parallel to Canagarajah:

We forget that people have been learning and teaching foreign languages long before modern methods arrived on the scene. Teachers and teacher educators in periphery communities such as in South Asia, Southeast Asia, South America, and elsewhere have a tremendous amount of local knowledge sedimented through practical experience. But still, all the established methods are based on theoretical insights derived almost exclusively from a Western knowledge base. The concept of method is bereft of any synthesis of external knowledge from center-based communities and local knowledge from periphery communities. (2006b: 165-166)

Further on, he refers to Canagarajah for support of his comment that:

There is now a greater awareness than ever before that simply because periphery communities have not adequately documented their knowledge base in second language teaching and learning does not mean that they have no knowledge base at all. It only means that the knowledge base that really exists has not been well documented or widely disseminated. (2006b: 221)

Regarding local/ global constructs, it is important to set them alongside the centre/periphery binary so that interconnecting attitudes can be perceived. 'Periphery communities' tend to be loosely equated with local communities and from there it is only a short step to 'non-native speaker' teachers, professionally debased because they belong to the 'Periphery' and adhere to local ways. However, as the foregoing has shown, there are changes in these attitudes, as more and more 'Periphery' teachers (cf. Canagarajah, self-described, 2004, above) take up centre positions and make their voices heard. As a consequence, those who occupy 'Centre' positions, cf. Holliday, also self-described 2005a: 305) are adjusting their thinking to accommodate changing directions. Being 'non-native', 'local' and on the 'Periphery' is losing its connotation of inferiority as stronger and stronger voices cross these boundaries and insist on the value of the knowledge derived from the local or the 'Periphery.'

Support for considering the non-western context of English Language Teaching is increasing, as shown by comments of this nature:

Much current TESOL practice worldwide has been criticised as being unduly, often inappropriately, Western-influenced (Canagarajah, 1999a, 1999c; Holliday, 1994, 2005; Phillipson, 1992), and there has been considerable debate surrounding the desirability of developing contextually appropriate pedagogies (Bax, 2003; Harmer, 2003; Holliday, 1994), which I contend could be better informed by research that focuses on the life histories of individual teachers. (Hayes, 2010: 58)

Similar aims are beginning to be expressed as writers such as Hayes investigate local teachers and their contexts. Hayes' study focuses on a particular situation, that involving conflict, which is not a feature of my study but which has the parallel goal of examining local teaching contexts, with the aim of informing the development of more appropriate pedagogies. Congruently with my research, Hayes seeks to expand knowledge of worldwide TESOL practices:

The article aims to contribute to an increased understanding of teachers' lives within their specific social contexts in order that the knowledge base of TESOL in its multiple professional realisations might be expanded. (2010: 58)

In another study, Hayes investigated the life of an English teacher in Thailand, herself Thai, where his expressed aim was to

... contribute to a wider contextual appreciation of teachers and teaching through exploring in particular this teacher's perceptions on her own language learning, her experiences as a teacher of English and her attempts to innovate in her classroom in a context which seemed to militate against such innovation. In so doing the study also aims to make a case for further research into the careers of NNS English teachers in order that the full richness and complexity of teaching and learning of English in the widest possible variety of socio-educational contexts can be revealed and compared. (2009: 84)

This aim parallels my own in its exploration of local context. While Hayes focuses on the details of the classroom, I have elected to provide an overview of how teachers use this same 'richness and complexity' to construct and take control of their local environments. Learning from the experiences of these multilingual teachers has meant for me the opportunity to take into account a range of contextual factors which explain and validate diverse ways of learning, using and teaching English. The contexts include geographical, historical, cultural, political, linguistic and educational factors that are all within the range of experiences described by participants and all contribute to understanding ELT in local contexts. Contextual knowledge as an important aspect of teacher cognition (cf. Borg 2003) is a strong theme throughout this thesis; it has already been noted with regard to CLT and will occupy an important role in the analysis of my data. It provides strong support for the reinterpretation of the 'Periphery', which is the subject of the next section.

3.5. Multilingualism and flows of English use: from ‘Periphery’ to ‘Epicentre’

With the rising volume of voices from the periphery has come an increase in the recognition of multilingualism as an attribute of language teachers. The new voices contributing to this influential twenty-first century movement and variety are suggested by titles such as ‘The voices of English-knowing bilinguals and the emergence of new epicentres’ (Pakir, 2001). In her introduction, she states:

The concern with language or languages and the role or roles that they played in a borderless world, was a recurrent one at the end of the twentieth century. It will remain a dominant one in this century: we are currently witnessing the effects of different kinds of flows – information, currency, people, cultural – which are characteristic of the end of the second millennium (Appadurai, 1990; Graddol, 1997). Being arguably the most influential language of globalisation, the English language has facilitated many of these ‘flows.’ Thus, in this new millennium, and for the foreseeable future (for the next fifty years or so), the English language remains a pivotal language, bringing with it many diverse roles. (Pakir, 2001: 1)

Such a view of the role of English underpins the present study, with its emphasis on comprehending the full diversity of English use by individuals. Pakir offers a further explanation of her title with this opinion:

The fact of the increasing numbers of outer Circle users making the shift to an inner Circle membership, although joining as members of a new inner Circle, means that English has become a global language, with new epicentres established by the English-knowing bilinguals. The voices of this newly emergent group need to be and will be harkened to in the borderless world that is shaping up today (2001: 11).

My research analyses the role of these ‘English-knowing bilinguals’ who are crucial to the ‘new epicentres’ because, as English teachers, they are themselves promoting change as they acquire an increasingly strong voice in the development and management of their profession. Pakir’s use of the word ‘Epicentres’ is a metaphor for the power of change and could be seen as an effective replacement of the word ‘Periphery.’

In the need to understand ‘linguistic creativity in multilingual situations across cultures’ Baker (2009) recommends moving to a more flexible view of language use, such as that embodied by ELF (English as a Lingua Franca). ELF has been defined by Seidlhofer as the English ‘chosen as the means of communication among people from different first language backgrounds’ (2005:

339). An important consideration for this study is that ‘as a consequence of its international use, English is being shaped as much by its non-native speakers as by its native speakers’ (ibid), which has implications for the role of ‘non-native’ multilingual speakers, as will be seen below.

Multilingual speakers not only possess knowledge of more than one language, but they may also be aware of more than one variety of English, which gives them the advantage over monolingual speakers. The concept of the ‘native speaker’ is further downgraded by this factor, testified to by notable multilinguals in the field. Speaking from his own experience, Canagarajah has redefined the place of English in multilingual settings, referring to ‘Lingua Franca English’(LFE) as a model of acquisition and use which bypasses ‘native speakers’ to claim existence in its own right:

A radical implication of this multilingualism is that all users of LFE have native competence of LFE, just as they have native competence in certain other languages and cultures. This characterization goes against our usual ways of using the concept of NS [native speaker]. Typically, one is an NS of only one language. However, this type of native competence (and insider status) in multiple languages is a well-known reality in many communities. LFE only makes this phenomenon more visible and global. An important implication is that unlike our treatment of those who are outsiders to British, American, or other national varieties of English, we cannot treat LFE speakers as incompetent. (2007: 920)

Such a reconceptualization of the role of English requires a reappraisal of the knowledge and skills of those who teach it.

Linguistic diversity is at the heart of multilingual communities. There is constant interaction between language groups, and they overlap, interpenetrate, and mesh in fascinating ways. Not only do people have multiple memberships, but they also hold in tension their affiliation with local and global language groups as the situation demands. (Canagarajah, 2007: 930)

This strand of ‘multiple membership’, with its emphasis on adaptability and flexibility, will be shown to be one of the strengths possessed by multilingual teachers, because it confers a capacity for appreciating the diverse priorities of different language groups. The concept of plurilingualism has been developed to explain linguistic flexibility and seems to entail an understanding of how languages interact.

In plurilingual communication, English may find accommodation in the repertoire of a South Asian, combining with his or her proficiency in one or more local languages. The person may not have advanced proficiency in English, and yet mix English words and grammatical structures into syntax from other languages. ... In this sense, plurilingual English is not an identifiable code or a systematized variety of English. It is a highly fluid and variable form of language practice. (Canagarajah, 2009: 7)

This complexity of language use is a strong feature of many ELT contexts, and is important background for a consideration of culture and language.

3.5.1 Multilingualism and culture

Baker (2009) produced evidence of ‘constant interaction between language groups’ in his survey of intercultural communication among English users in a Thai higher education setting. He also acknowledged that changes were occurring in contemporary contexts:

Given the multilingual and multicultural contexts of much ELF communication, any attempt to propose a straightforward language–culture–nation correlation must be seen as a gross oversimplification. Thus, a richer understanding is needed of the fluid and diverse relationships between languages and cultures.’ (2009: 567)

He recommended that ‘cultures in ELF should be conceived as liminal, emergent resources that are in a constant state of fluidity and flux between local and global references, creating new practices and forms in each instance of intercultural communication.’ (ibid: 568) Baker has here produced another powerful reason for listening to local voices by highlighting the emergence of a new balance of relationships in intercultural communication. The same emphasis on fluidity and lack of fixity has already been referred to in the discussion of Communicative Competence in Chapter 2, and is equally applicable to Baker’s study of intercultural English use in Thailand, for he states, ‘In sum, linguistic and cultural forms expressed through ELF are likely to be hybrid, dynamic, and continuously adapting to local needs, global influences, and the demands of communicating across cultures.’ (ibid: 574)

He reiterates the importance of local and global references for ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) communication. Baker’s findings, set out below, are important for my research because they show that:

... language can never be culturally neutral; each participant brings with them their own unique cultural history which results in particular communicative behaviours and

expectations. At the same time, individuals are not bound by this history and, as the cited examples show, are capable of, and indeed need to be able to adapt to new, alternative communicative practices and interpretations. Thus, for learners of English as a lingua franca, the ability to negotiate, mediate, and adapt to emerging communicative practices is at least as important as systematic knowledge of languages and their specific relationships to other cultures. (2009: 588)

Baker's belief in a 'unique cultural history' applies to my participants, who can be shown to use this aspect of their identities to make sense of the role of English in their lives. Moreover, his findings capture the essential capacity of the individual to adapt in a globalizing world, with its boundless opportunities for communication across a range of situations. Language learning, it is suggested, is no longer limited to the mastery of established systems, but requires awareness of the immense possibilities for negotiation and mediation. The emphasis has shifted from valuing the skills of 'native speakers' to valuing the skills of those able to 'adapt to emerging communicative practices'. Understanding others thus takes precedence over native speakerhood and indicates the need to investigate more closely the strengths of multilingual teachers who have familiarized themselves with different practices.

3.5.1. Multilingual teachers and the choice of English teaching models

Contrasting opinions have been expressed about the use of a 'native-speaker model' and the same objections as those raised in the discussion of communicative competence, above, apply to teachers' choice of a professional model. Research by Young and Walsh (2010) refers to the diminishing role of a 'native speaker' model. In a survey of 'non-native speaker' teachers about preferred varieties of English, however, they learnt that American English was seen as the preferred model and hence:

... the main findings do not support the concept of EIL/ELF which is currently being advocated in some quarters. Rather, most teacher participants adopted what they felt to be a very practical and pragmatic perspective on varieties of English, suggesting a need to believe in a 'standard' form of the language. This perspective was upheld even when participants acknowledged that it does not really correspond to the reality of Englishes which are in use worldwide (2010: 135)

This pragmatic interest in teaching a standard form shows a divergence from academic preoccupations with EIL/ELF distinctions, which Young and Walsh found to be 'something of a side issue' (2010: 136). As with the teaching goals summarised by Pakir, above, the emphasis for teachers is on dealing with the demands of the local context, reflecting the same concerns as those appearing in my data. The main interest lay in teaching an acceptable 'standard English'

but without a serious attachment to the notion of a ‘native speaker.’ A further highly pertinent finding from this study for my research is that:

... most participants are more concerned with ways of selecting, adapting and exploiting a variety which is appropriate to their local context than with issues around the usefulness or appropriacy of EIL/ELF (Young & Walsh 2010: 136)

Also important is the implication that ‘understandings of ‘which English’ and ‘whose English’ should be related closely to developing an understanding of local contexts in the first instance (ibid). Also important is the implication that ‘understandings of ‘which English’ and ‘whose English’ should be related closely to developing an understanding of local contexts in the first instance (ibid). Research by Park and Wee (2011) advocates a ‘practice-based model’ for English teaching which also assigns value to local context, as in this definition: ‘we define the practice-based perspective as a position which treats language not as a fixed structural system with static

rules but as an emergent product of speakers’ practices in local contexts. (2011:361)

This position is supported in my research, in which participants demonstrate strong affiliation with their teaching contexts.

Research in China on the extent to which Chinese English learners and teachers wished to adopt a ‘native speaker’ model, recommended that:

... the teaching of college Englishes in China should still adopt standard Englishes as the teaching model, because a native speaker model ‘serves as a complete and convenient starting point, particularly with its socio-cultural richness’. (Kuo, 2006 cited in He and Zhang, 2010: 785.)

He and Zhang made this recommendation, however, alongside the admission that there are no systematic studies of ‘China English’ which would allow it to replace a ‘native speaker’ model and suggested that further research should be centred around devising such a model. Their expression of interest in the development of ‘China English’ suggests that Chinese researchers are looking beyond the acceptance of ‘standard English’ to the evolution of a variety appropriate to their context. It would seem that teachers around the world are more occupied with teaching an appropriate standard of English than feeling threatened by ‘native speaker’ models. What is of paramount importance is a reliable standard which learners can be expected to attain and the problem seems to lie in what to call this standard -‘native speaker’, ‘lingua franca English’,

'international English' – without causing unwarranted offence. Current discussions of ELF and 'Which English' show conflicting attitudes to the 'native speaker' model. The conflict is possibly indicative of uncertainty in the face of rapid change, as 'non-native speaker' or 'multilingual teachers articulate how they see English teaching developing in their environments, particularly concerning the 'native speaker' model. My data will show support for the frequently expressed belief in the importance of using context to determine the appropriate model to be taught and evidence will be adduced to show the evolution of specific roles for 'native speakers

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of some recent influences on language teacher identity, with particular emphasis on the overtaking of the 'native' or 'non-native' teacher by the more inclusive and relevant 'multilingual' teacher. Beginning with the historical, colonial background, there has been an exploration of how identity is currently viewed and constructed, showing the impact of changing global factors seen through a predominantly postmodern lens with its blurring of the boundaries separating fixed ideas.

The notion of the multilingual teacher has been shown to be allied to notions of English varieties, as researchers start to consider in greater depth who is using English around the world, often in the original sense of a lingua franca, or common language. The implications of the perceived diversity of users have been outlined with particular reference to how the language is described. The emerging awareness that opinions about English and how it is taught may justifiably differ according to context has been shown to be important for describing varieties of the language.

In the light of this portrayal of how multilingual English teachers are seen and defined globally, by themselves and by others, I will now proceed to an analysis of the data obtained from my participants, showing how they negotiate, in their own lives, the changes described in these two chapters dealing with background knowledge related to Culture and Globalisation, and, as members of new 'Epicentres' replacing the former 'Periphery', with professional demands. Firstly, though, in the next chapter, I will describe the methodological approach I developed to obtain this information.

CHAPTER 4 AN APPROPRIATE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the journey to construct an appropriate research methodology. Since this is a qualitative study which develops an interpretive paradigm, relying principally on conversational data, my aim is to clarify the key links between the research questions and the methodology, showing that within the parameters defined, no other approach would have cohered so well with the subject matter, both in terms of content and in terms of establishing a rapport on an interpersonal level, essential to research of this nature.

The chapter begins with a consideration of relevant aspects of qualitative research, paying particular attention to the role of the researcher, including the various influences currently impacting on that role and the theoretical underpinnings of the methodologies adopted. The central theme of the researcher's role is developed further in a discussion of how recognised methodological strands were woven together in the research design, especially interview and narrative approaches with particular reference to the role of conversational data and its suitability in a thesis highlighting 'learning from others'. These sections lay the foundations for a description of how data was gathered for this study, including a survey of the strengths and weaknesses observed during the process.

4.2. Appropriate research methodology – the qualitative approach

An initial broad justification for the interview approach to data gathering was provided by Dornyei:

The interview is a natural and socially acceptable way of collecting information that most people feel comfortable with and which can be used in a variety of situations and focusing on diverse topics to yield in-depth data. The interviewer's presence allows for flexible approaches, probing into any emerging new issue, while the interview guide helps maintain a systematic coverage of the domain. (2007: 143)

My data analysis chapters will testify to the 'natural and socially acceptable way' in which information was obtained for this research, together with the flexibility which allowed for the

discovery of unexpected influences. This summary by Denzin of how the qualitative researcher approaches conversational data lays bare the skeleton of my research plan.

The qualitative researcher reproduces experiences that embody cultural meanings and cultural understandings that operate in the 'real' world. These texts, to repeat Raymond Carver's (1989a) injunction, carry news from one world to another. This news is based... on three types of discourse: ordinary talk and speech, inscriptions of that speech in the form of transcriptions, and written interpretations based on talk and its inscriptions. (1997: 32 -33)

With the metaphor of 'carrying news from one world to another' he evokes the complexity of portraying the 'real' world in a valid way. From my point of view, I have gathered 'news' from the world my participants consider real, through 'ordinary talk and speech' which, having transcribed, I proceed to analyse and interpret, with reference to the current state of knowledge in the field. The complexity lying beneath this progression is an integral part of the 'real world' being portrayed, since any definition of reality requires an elaboration of the forces influencing the writer to make that particular definition. In a post-modern setting, 'real' is a much-contested adjective and can no longer be left to stand on its own as affirmation of something firm and incontestable.

Human beings, as Jerome Bruner observed (1990) do not terminate at their own skin, they are, for better or worse, embodiments of a culture, selecting from among its symbols and discourses, consciously or otherwise, what to believe and what to say. ... The relationship between representation (the story) and reality (experience) is far from simple and linear. Stories, as Foucault and others have taught (Foucault 1979; White and Epston, 1990) 'constitute' as well as 'reflect' experience; reality and representation are not easily prised apart. (West, 2001: 2)

Viewed in the light of these words by West, data analysis is indeed a complex process in qualitative research, and his statement about reality and representation echoes the metaphor of different worlds used by Denzin, and validates the metaphor further by acknowledging that the transformation of the 'experience' into the 'story' depends on the 'symbols and discourses' chosen by individual human beings. This understood, the 'real world' presented in this thesis is continuously supported with the words of participants, the literature referring to their worlds, and my interpretation of these features, seen from my position in the world I know, and am familiar with, which surrounds my 'own skin' and is therefore the only tenable position I can adopt.

4.2.1 Developing a blended approach –autobiographical and narrative methods

As the primary source of data for this research was recorded conversations, the methodology adopted relied on aspects of narrative and autobiographical principles, interpreted as will be discussed in section 4, below, from a phenomenological stance. In this way the interpersonal nature of the study is validated and consolidated.

The following comments, taken from Wellington et al (2005), summarise aspects of qualitative methodology appropriate for this study:

... in the context of research, 'narrative' is generally understood to refer to qualitative research that uses and tells stories. Many people who use explicitly narrative approaches do so, at least partly, out of a political conviction that social research should be accessible and interesting, because they believe that it should seek to capture something of the sense of life as it is lived, and because they want to avoid the negative ethical and power consequences of assuming the sort of authoritative voice that denies the possibility of multiple realities. (2005: 159)

Although stories do not constitute the entirety of my data, they occur naturally, as part of the interpersonal interaction. Moreover, they constitute part of what is referred to below as 'understanding and interpreting individual stories' and they certainly capture 'life as it is lived' thus fulfilling a phenomenological goal. Neither is there any denying that stories do make social research more 'accessible and interesting' and this is in part due to the autobiographical approach:

Research using an autobiographical approach ... recognises, too, how a new synthesis, a new way of understanding and interpreting individual stories, can emerge from what West (2001: 428) referred to as the 'shared interrogation' by interviewer and interviewee of the narratives they generate in dialogue with each other. Research informed by a belief that it should be conducted 'with' not 'on' other people would also pick up the point made by Freedman and Combs (1996:77) that it makes all the difference in the world what sort of narrative is available to a person ... (Wellington et al: 118)

Again, I do not claim that I have used a predominantly autobiographical approach to gather my data but it nonetheless adds an important layer insofar as participants sometimes use their own experiences, essentially autobiographical, to illustrate points and hence reinforce validity. Conducting research in a shared professional world is one way of allowing 'shared interrogation' as the dialogues are built upon a common basis, familiar to both sides. The awareness that knowledge can be thus co-constructed strengthens and validates the data because the researcher

is moved from a position of all-knowingness to one in which she must admit the views of her participants. One example of this, discussed in chapter 5, is the views expressed about Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the differing perceptions of this phenomenon that emerge through conversation.

Pavlenko (2007) illustrates the myriad uses to which narrative research can be put. Although she discusses purposes differing to mine, for example understanding immigrant narratives, she demonstrates the importance of setting the narrative within a wider context than the researcher's own concerns might occupy:

Notably, I do not argue that applied linguists are in the business of determining the 'truth value' of particular accounts. At the same time, they cannot conduct their analyses in a vacuum and treat narrative versions of reality as reality itself. Rather, narrative analysis in sociolinguistic studies has to consider larger historical, political, social, and economic circumstances that shape the narratives and are reflected in them, language ideologies and discourses that have currency in narrators' communities and with regard to which they position themselves, and, last but not least, the setting where particular versions of narrative experience are produced and the audience they are produced for. (Pavlenko, 2007: 176-7)

My role as a qualitative researcher does not permit me to 'determine the "truth value"' of what participants tell me and I agree, in accordance with current postmodern attitudes that reality cannot be easily defined. (cf. Brewer, 'Postmodernists argue that there is no one 'reality' and ethnography captures only the version that the researcher selects' (2000: 44). I, too, as I search for answers to my research questions, am concerned with perceptions of local communities and hence with taking knowledge outside the reality that I take for granted and to this extent there is an overlap between Pavlenko's interest in multilingual identity in applied linguistics and my interest in the development of this identity. . However, Pavlenko is considering the effect of change of context on language use whereas my research focuses on diversity in language use within a stable context. There is therefore a different emphasis but one for which narrative research is equally valuable. I am also more interested to clarify participants' use of English in contrast to other languages, given their multilingual dimension.

Furthermore, Pavlenko is considering the particular relevance of narrative research for applied linguistics, whereas my research ventures more in the direction of sociolinguistics, so I am not as

involved in the use of language by participants as in the setting for their use of language, although both aspects are, to some extent, inseparable. I am also more interested to clarify their use of English in contrast to other languages, given their multilingual dimension.

Qualitative research which seeks information from human beings, then, is most rewarding when it includes autobiographical and narrative aspects, since they are the ways in which humans best understand each other. The postmodern influence, furthermore, values these intensely human aspects, since, according to Webster and Mertova:

Postmodernism rejects the notion that truth and knowledge are to be found through rational thought or method. Whereas modernism values the external, postmodernism values the internal, or the 'I', and puts greater emphasis on human-centred approaches. It therefore has an inherent interest in human factors relating to the acquisition of knowledge. (2007: 28-9)

In my data analysis, I have discussed both 'external' and 'internal' influences on participants' attitudes to English use, without necessarily ascribing greater value to one or the other perspective because I see both as having an impact on individual lives. Data which includes reminiscences of lived experiences, however, is a powerful means of encouraging the researcher to 'bracket' prior beliefs (cf. Holliday 2007a) and move from 'self' to 'other' in constructing reality.

4.2.2 The goals of qualitative research

There is a generally accepted view about social science research that it should be driven by a need to uncover a perceived injustice. Hammersley (1998), who has provided much recent insight into qualitative research approaches, especially considering ethnography, adopts a view which embraces the above when he asks, and answers, this question: '...what is research for, what function should it be designed to serve? In my view... to produce knowledge that is of public relevance.' (1998: 62) Further on (p.70) he adds, '... research findings must be relevant to shared values.' The problem here is that sometimes these 'shared values' are not immediately apparent; they are values that the researcher, and her immediate research community, believe to be held in common but it becomes necessary to put research findings in such a way that the wider professional public sees no other way but to accept them. Hence, the researcher needs to

be persuasive. A long-standing belief in the superiority of the native-speaker, for example, can be hard to shake.

4.3. The role of the researcher

Qualitative research assigns a particular value to the role of the researcher unknown in quantitative research, which does not allow for researcher influence on findings. Through this role, the uniqueness of each piece of research is acknowledged because it is seen as a direct result of the uniqueness of each researcher. The qualitative researcher thus becomes responsible for constructing a principled approach which can stand up to rigorous investigation. (Holliday, 2007a: 20)

4.3.1 Using Systemic Functional Linguistics to explain approach to research design

My role as researcher is strongly influenced by working in Australia, where Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics constitutes part of my background in the disciplines of applied linguistics and literature. I feel that my research design is in many ways analogous to a description of language from a Hallidayan perspective because it has evolved according to the topic, setting and participants. By borrowing terms from Systemic Functional Linguistics, I am better able to describe the nature of the interactions linguistically and culturally in a way that shows what is going on between researcher and participants, in fact making the process more transparent within a recognised linguistic framework. Even though it is not relevant for me to perform a complete systemic analysis of my data, I am able to render the description of it more precisely with reference to 'field, tenor and mode' as follows, with definitions from J R Martin:

Field refers to what is going on, where what is going on is interpreted institutionally, in terms of some culturally recognised activity (what people are doing with their lives as it were). Examples of fields are activities such as tennis, opera, linguistics, cooking, building construction, farming, politics, education and so on. ...

Tenor refers to the way you relate to other people when doing what you do. One aspect of this is status. Our society, like all other human societies we know of, is structured in such a way that people have power over one another. This is power of various kinds: mature people tend to dominate younger ones, commanding their respect; bosses dominate employees; teachers dominate students and so on

Mode refers to the channel you select to communicate – the choice most commonly presented is between speech and writing. But modern society makes use of many

additional channels: email, telephone, radio, television, video, film and so on, each a distinct mode in its own right. (Martin, 2001: 152-3)

Given that each research design is different (cf. Holliday, op.cit), this basic outline of Field, Tenor and Mode is important for me to include as part of my methodological approach because it shows valuable research tools that I have used to clarify my analysis. If we superimpose notions of 'Genre' and 'Register' over these three divisions we are able to refine our understanding of how an interaction is limited. The relationship of register and genre can be loosely related to Malinowski, 'who argued that contexts both of situation and culture were important if we are to fully interpret the meaning of a text. Our level of genre corresponds roughly to context of culture in his sense, our register perhaps to his context of situation'. (Martin, *ibid*: 155) I have discussed the relevance of contexts of culture and situation for my thesis elsewhere (Chapter 1) . When the interrelated nature of language, register and genre is understood, there is little need to seek further definition of the interactions being described because their performance is contained by these descriptions. My research context can be readily described as follows:

Field: Language teaching experience. This involves a shared lexical understanding which allows communication to take place within the expectations generated by the English teaching profession. The register will be the choice of language for the genre defined by Martin as a 'staged, goal-oriented purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture'. (*ibid*) – in this case, the research interview situation which, as I have noted above, is familiar to postgraduate students in this context. The relationship between genre and culture then becomes easier to distinguish, the more so if we recognise genre as being 'set up to explain... how you accomplish things, on a day-to-day basis, in a culturally specific way' (*ibid*: 161). Thus for my data collection I have the benefit of operating within a defined, professional, academic culture, consequently reducing the possibility of misunderstanding. Another aspect of this interaction is clarified by the notion of tenor, which as seen above, describes the relationship between the participants. This unavoidably involves an element of power which, although downplayed is a recognisable aspect of the researcher-researched relationship. The tenor then is in the form of conversations between professionals, with the researcher guiding topic development according to responses given by participants. Alongside this element of power, and bound up with it to some extent, is that of contact, which refers to the interpersonal nature of our relationship with others in terms of how we feel about them or how we are aligned to them (Martin, *ibid*: 160).

The aspect of mode, here, of course, is speech, in the form of face-to-face recorded conversations in informal, academic settings. Its importance lies in showing how choices are made about language according to the channel of communication. The most obvious example is the difference between speech and writing but when the range of spoken modes is considered, from face-to-face to stream of consciousness thinking aloud, the influence of mode on language choices can be appreciated. Hence, understanding that these interviews were conducted in face-to-face mode instead of, for example by email, immediately alerts the reader to the possible range of benefits and limitations, such as reacting to certain expressions or tones of voice, and not being able to think about comments before responding, or to retract them.

This recorded speech has an additional important dimension though. It changes its nature when it becomes transcribed, written data and there are thus a number of complex stages which the collected language samples must pass through in the course of a research project. It is not my intention to present a systemic functional analysis of my data, but I wish simply to signal the dimensions of interpretation possible when one takes advantage of well-designed schemes of linguistic analysis. Accepting, even at this superficial level, a carefully crafted description of how language works in making meaning between individuals is surely an essential step to attaining the global perspective needed for the profession. It is not necessary to make these connections explicit in the data but I have indicated their existence at the beginning of this methodology chapter because they are evidence of a significant undercurrent in my background which has guided my interest in developing a conversational approach to data collection. . It would have been possible to take this analysis further but to do so would have meant imposing a framework which distracts the reader from the central theme of the thesis, ‘learning from multilingual teachers of English.’ Applying the tenets of field, tenor and mode would be another way of validating the data interpretation. The strengths of Halliday’s analytical tools would have added an interesting dimension but my own qualitative approach might not have had the same focus because I was exploring issues arising from my interaction with the participants themselves. This emerges in my discussion of a data exemplar below where I discuss how I constructed a thematic analysis. The phenomenological principles I adopted, which depended on developing themes through personal interaction and reaction, would have been obscured by the overlay of Systemic Functional Grammar.

Applied linguists who are also researchers are surely influenced by their backgrounds in the same way as anthropologists like Geertz (cf. Chapter 2) and even when borrowing from other disciplines, are likely to structure their data in certain ways. I have not tested this hypothesis thoroughly, but by describing the influences on my research methods my intention is to render them transparent, highlighting my literary and linguistic backgrounds as shaping the approach taken.

4.3.2 The researcher and the novelist: drawing on similar skills

My development of an appropriate research method also owes much to my literary background, since I studied French, English and Italian literature at postgraduate level and I find I am able to validate my approach through a comparison between the researcher and the novelist. The researcher cannot validly be all-knowing like the novelist, but must be aware of different literacies, by which I mean the contexts for different uses of language. The researcher looking at language has to adopt a different position, representing the language use of the participants, rather than creating it. Like the novelist, the researcher then has to shape the reality she is dealing with and here the interaction of self with participants becomes paramount to the success of the project. It has often been observed that in qualitative research the researcher is not simply the recorder of data but capable of interpreting the data in more than one way. Choice of what to record and how to interpret what is recorded involve crucial decision-making by the researcher.

Matthew Kneale's *English Passengers*, (2000) about an odd assortment of people travelling to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in the mid-19th century, is a good example of how the novelist creates different voices. Kneale has very cleverly presented different views of the same events by different people and thus constructs realities which the reader can identify with by choice. What he does extremely well is use the language varieties of the different characters to express these realities. The events taking place in the novel are observed through the eyes of the passengers and the ship's captain, who hails from the Isle of Man and thus cultural differences are a theme from the novel's beginning. Then characters already in Van Diemen's Land are introduced, including a young aboriginal boy, a convict and various members of the Hobart establishment. What is most striking about the novel is the different ways each of the characters uses language and how this reflects their identities. These examples portraying first impressions

of Melbourne on two characters make my point: the captain thinks as a seafaring man who has been enduring the rigours of a long sea voyage for many months:

Waiting to catch a few drops of gold from the diggers were scarlet girls aplenty. These looked like they'd been doing well enough, some of them, lounging about as if it was their own town, and dressed so fine they might almost have been proper ladies except for their loitering, and their come-along glances. Why, they had all the respectable females looking quite peeved. (2000: 211)

In contrast, we have the pompous language of the self-righteous Reverend Wilson recording a different perception: 'I do not believe that I had ever found myself in a spot so wholly lacking in any sense of the spiritual as Melbourne town, where there seemed only one subject that attracted men's attention' (ibid: 222).

I have introduced *English Passengers* as an allegory of the qualitative research process, particularly regarding the responsibility of the researcher, because it illustrates how a setting may be interpreted in entirely different ways according to the perceptions of the beholder. In order to be understood, and evaluated appropriately, the researcher needs to establish whether she has the background of a Reverend Wilson, who would bemoan the lack of 'the spiritual', or of a cynical sea captain, who would be amused at the 'scarlet girls' offending the 'respectable ladies', or, having considered these positions, she might take another angle entirely, ignoring moral judgment and perhaps commenting on the liveliness and bustle of the port scene. In other words, the researcher needs to be aware of her own prejudices and stand back from them, using the process described as 'bracketing', the phenomenological technique which 'forces the researcher to think again and hold back from the explanation which most easily springs to mind. It requires her to recognise where her particular prejudices lie and to discipline herself to put them aside' (Holliday, 2007a: 177).

Accordingly, the researcher must convince the reader that the data conforms to certain standards. The methods chosen, however, must show consistency and the researcher needs to draw on her own background to make sense of the context.

4.3.1. The researcher in qualitative research

Qualitative research involves, first and foremost, an understanding of the role of the researcher because, if there is no clear establishment of role, the research findings will lose validity.

Moreover, 'Because it is in the essential nature of qualitative research to explore the deeper elements of social action, and because qualitative research is in itself social action, the relationship between the researcher and the participant is an issue which inevitably pervades all aspects' (Holliday 2007a: 137). This is a basic characteristic of qualitative research that sets it apart from quantitative methodology, namely that the researcher acknowledges her presence as influential to the research outcomes. In social science research, it is hardly possible to pretend otherwise, given that the participants are human beings, interacting in some way with the researcher. It is of utmost importance that the research interviewer is able to interpret the data she collects and justify her interpretation since, again in Holliday's words: 'the presence and influence of the researcher are unavoidable, and indeed a resource, which must be acted upon'. (ibid)

4.3.2. Positioning the researcher

To understand more fully and deeply the role of the researcher in my field, it is enlightening to consider further explorations by Holliday, along with Ramanathan, Canagarajah, Pennycook and Nelson, in their forum discussion in *Journal of Language and Identity in Education* (2005). In this issue, Ramanathan instigated the topic and summarises the various contributions:

As Alastair Pennycook points out in his piece, we need to pay attention to how our subject positions are being performed as we write; Adrian Holliday wrestles with whether and how he can speak for others or only for himself... Suresh Canagarajah warns about the dangers of some kinds of postmodernist writing that aim to capture a field's plurality but end up communicating little that is of value to the discipline; Cynthia Nelson speaks of the value of interspersing the author's "inner monologue" in the writing process; and I write of insider-outsider stratifications in my "home culture" and how particular kinds of self-disclosure can actually exacerbate power relations. (Ramanathan 2005: 292)

All of these reflections remind us that the researcher has great responsibility in presenting interpretations of data which cannot avoid the influence of her/his own experience. 'Part of my discomfort stems from my own privileged caste status, ..., I am a Tamilian Brahmin, and it is with a lot of trepidation (and shame, given the historical atrocities and colonization associated with this caste category) that I even acknowledge this.' (ibid: 296)

The diversity of background among these writers contrasts strikingly with similarity of beliefs and attitudes. Compare Ramanathan's lines above with these of Holliday: 'I write from a

position of power and privilege, from the best resourced part of the TESOL world.’ (2005a: 305). What is similar here is an acknowledgement of power as part of the researcher’s identity. I, too, come from ‘the best resourced part of the TESOL world’ but it is also a part of the world which is responsible for ‘historical atrocities’ committed not because of caste but out of what is regarded by many as imperialist greed. The danger for me, therefore, is that Centre-based post-imperialist writing can obliterate awareness of other atrocities affecting researchers with different historical backgrounds. It is easy to forget that we have colleagues in our profession who perceive their status from different historical standpoints, which influence thinking about identity in profound ways. Appreciation of this diversity, I would argue, takes us beyond the superficiality of the native/nonnative speaker debate into a level where issues of greater significance can be investigated, including the myriad factors which constitute the identity of the so-called nonnative speaker because these factors, I believe, can be powerfully superimposed over the glib dichotomy of ‘native/nonnative’ to reveal unconsidered complexities.

4.3.5 Reflexivity

Qualitative research relying mainly on interviews thrusts the researcher-interviewer very firmly into the limelight. Therefore reflexivity, one of the defining characteristics of qualitative research, acquires an even more important role in establishing the validity of the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison here provide a lucid and comprehensive definition:

Reflexivity recognises that researchers are inescapably part of the social world they are researching, and, indeed, that this social world is an already interpreted world by the actors, undermining the notion of objective reality. Researchers are in the world and of the world. They bring their own biographies to the research situation and participants behave in particular ways in their presence. Reflexivity suggests that researchers should acknowledge and disclose their own selves in the research; they should hold themselves up to the light... Highly reflexive researchers will be acutely aware of the ways in which their selectivity, perception, background and inductive processes shape the research. (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 141)

The singular nature of every research situation is explained here with the emphasis on the inseparability of the researcher from their research processes, the implication being that participants will respond differently to each individual, rather like actors responding to different audiences. Among others discussing this concept, Holliday imbues it with a more personal tone:

The first thing is to accept the notion of reflexivity. This is to understand that “the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their socio-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer upon them” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 16). It would, therefore, be a mistake to deny who I am and what my own ideological preoccupations are, and to realize, and capitalize on the fact that I am an interactant in the area I am researching in one way or another. (Holliday, 2005a: 305)

Such an approach does not mean dwelling on one’s own preoccupations to the extent of forgetting the relevance of the research question for its intended audience. Rather, it entails greater responsibility on the part of the researcher in comprehending the effects of their ‘socio-historical locations’ on the way they interpret and present their data. This responsibility is an expected consequence of well-established beliefs held by qualitative research experts, for example, David Silverman, on the authority of Max Weber:

As the German sociologist Max Weber pointed out in the early years of this century, all research is contaminated to some extent by the values of the researcher. Only through those values do certain problems get identified and studied in particular ways. Even the commitment to scientific (or rigorous) method is itself, as Weber emphasizes, a value. Finally the conclusions and implications to be drawn from a study are, Weber stresses, largely grounded in the moral and political beliefs of the researcher. (Silverman, 2000: 200)

Silverman’s use of ‘contaminated’ is interesting here, suggesting the impossibility of having a totally ‘pure’ piece of research and suggesting that values can muddy the waters of clear thinking. His conclusion on the intrusiveness of values is positive, however, as long as awareness of their role is maintained. This emphasis on the researcher’s values chimes well with Holliday’s observations on the researcher’s position vis-à-vis participants:

I do not therefore presume to be speaking for any of them [participants]. I speak only for myself, someone who has worked with and learnt from them. All the examples I cite from my own personal experience speak to me in a similar way to the voices of my interviewees. The only systematicity in the way I have collected and used the data is that it resonates with what I feel is important in connection with my theme.

In this sense I am writing from only my own position, from my own experience as an educator from the English-speaking West with a particular biography, training, and socialization. This means that the examples from my own experience are written as personal narratives that incorporate the voices of others as I have interpreted them. (Holliday, 2005a: 306)

Implicit in the claim to be writing from one's own position and experience is that one will be adhering to certain values derived from these, and Holliday's insistence on speaking for himself establishes clearly where responsibility lies.

A further warning on the need to deal carefully with issues of subjectivity is sounded by Nelson:

The increasingly common practice of researchers writing their own subjectivity overtly into their research can be understood to have a number of uses. It can be considered a means of expanding or enriching one's data sources; tracing one's complex and fraught positionings vis-à-vis the research participants or the subject matter; or recognizing one's own limitations as a researcher. Yet at the same time, texts in which the researcher's subjectivity is foregrounded can be perceived as irrelevant, self-indulgent, or insufficiently critical. In negotiating the delicate balance between underacknowledging or overacknowledging the researcher's shaping presence in the research, a crucial question is not so much whether to make one's presence in the text explicit or implicit, but to what end—that is, with what purpose and with what likely effects should “the researcher” be crafted textually? (Nelson, 2005: 315)

Nelson raises an important point here regarding the extent to which the researcher's identity should be incorporated into the study. Her observations form part of the discussion of the researcher's identity in *Journal of Language and Identity in Education*, considered above and she has here summarised concerns about how far the researcher's position can be considered relevant to the topic.

4.3.6 Defining my position

After careful consideration of her final question, as well as of the words of others quoted above, I have decided that the pertinent factors of my identity that may be alluded to in this thesis are:

1. Background professional experience leading to the evolution of the topic
2. Professional experience shared with participants
3. Related interests, especially literary, which have influenced the shaping of the research
4. Historical and geographical aspects of national identity

These features are both necessary and sufficient for defining my role as a qualitative researcher, which requires a certain level of identity to validate the research findings. 1) is necessary

because it allows me to establish credibility and justify my research interest (cf. Chapter 1). 2) is important for the interaction in the research interviews while 3) permits aspects of the researcher's individuality to be admitted as shaping the research. 4) is used with caution but is relevant for discussions of researcher identity such as those of Holliday and Ramanathan, above. It also seems important that if the participants' countries of origin are listed, the researcher's should also be, given the emphasis on shared experiences.

4.4. Developing the interview approach – using Phenomenological principles with some support from Social Constructivism

In this section, phenomenology is shown to be particularly appropriate for justifying the interview approach, while further clarification of the interactions and their context is provided by social constructivism.

4.4.1 Phenomenology

As I describe below, I relied strongly on the connection with my topic provided by semi-structured interviews and there is considerable justification for this approach provided by van Manen's definition of phenomenology:

... the study of lived experience ... phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. ... it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world. (1990: 9)

These words convey the essence of what this study is about. Learning from the experiences of multilingual teachers has enabled me to be in 'more direct contact with the world' because I have had the opportunity to 'develop plausible insights' through a 'study of lived experience' by drawing on phenomenology to clarify the knowledge gained. The emphasis placed by phenomenology on human experience allows the researcher to explore more fully the depth and complexity of the chosen phenomenon.

There are many ways of conducting interviews for qualitative research and it is up to the researcher to determine which approach will best serve her topic. Without sufficient understanding of how to get the most from a research interview, much relevant material may be lost or ignored. For me, a semi-structured interview approach initially appealed as a way of

beginning the exploration of my topic, and allowing for the emergence of themes that I would be able to pursue. This is in line with the phenomenological approach described by Schutz, and summarized by Holstein and Gubrium:

The social sciences should focus on the ways that the life world – the world every individual takes for granted – is experienced by its members. Schutz cautions that the ‘safeguarding of this subjective point of view is the only but sufficient guarantee that the world of social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer’. (2005: 8)

The warning here is against the danger of creating a new world from one’s data and to avoid this, it is essential to remember the purpose of conducting these interviews in the first place –exactly as stated above – to find out how ‘the lifeworld ... is experienced by its members’, not by the researcher! Interpretation then becomes a delicate activity in which the researcher needs to adopt a reflexive attitude in order to recognise the impact of her involvement on the data. Thus the importance of recognising reflexivity is carried forward from section 4.3.5, above and becomes equally important to a discussion of how interviews are conducted. A further warning about the need for a rigorous approach is given by van Manen in *Researching Lived Experience* (1990):

Unless the researcher remains strong in his or her orientation to the fundamental question or notion, there will be many temptations to get side-tracked or to wander aimlessly and indulge in wishy-washy speculations, to settle for preconceived opinions and conceptions, to become enchanted with narcissistic reflections or self-indulgent preoccupations, or to fall back onto taxonomic concepts or abstracting theories. (1990: 33)

This is a stern warning and one that should be heeded because it summarises the main criticisms of qualitative research. Van Manen’s work is also highly relevant because it clarifies a phenomenological approach to human science research and phenomenology provides strong support to the development of my methodology. There are, claims van Manen, six research activities comprising a practical phenomenological approach:

... turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it;
reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon;
describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. (1990: 30-31)

The warning quoted above in fact refers to theme 5, but theme 2 also needs to be considered with care because it is all too easy to move from the world of lived experience to a world which the researcher constructs to suit her aims. Therefore it is necessary to constantly recall the essential strength of interview data: that it allows participants experiencing the phenomenon to describe their experiences and their lifeworlds, and it is these descriptions that the researcher must allow to emerge.

4.4.2 Applying this approach to my research

I furthermore find these categories helpful because they render my method (and methodology) more transparent.. Although, for reasons expressed above, it is not valid to rely on one method alone for the analysis of qualitative data, as van Manen himself states ‘Discussions of method and methodology are meant not to prescribe a mechanistic set of procedures, but to animate inventiveness and stimulate insight’ (ibid: 30) it is important to develop a framework based on established principles. Being able to discern within my own approach the steps mapped out by notable theorists in the field adds validity to the approach I have taken.

Further insightful advice about conducting research interviews is found in Kvale’s book on interviews (1996). In addition to discussing the relevance of phenomenology for interview-based research (p.52ff), Kvale stresses the value of conversational interaction as, above all, human interaction:

There is a move away from obtaining knowledge primarily through external observation and experimental manipulation of human subjects, toward an understanding by means of conversations with the human beings to be understood. The subjects not only answer questions prepared by an expert, but themselves formulate in a dialogue their own conceptions of the lived world. The sensitivity of

the interview and its closeness to the subjects' lived world can lead to knowledge that can be used to enhance the human condition. (1996:11)

Kvale goes on to discuss comprehensively the philosophical underpinnings to interview techniques, including postmodernism, hermeneutics, phenomenology and dialectics, before analyzing, in precise detail, the stages of a research interview. Regarding the role of phenomenology, Kvale reinforces Husserl's concept of bracketing, discussed by Holliday, Holstein and Gubrium, van Manen, and others, although he does not use this mathematical term: 'There is the phenomenological ideal of listening without prejudice, allowing the interviewees' descriptions of their experiences to unfold without interruptions from interviewer questions and the presuppositions these involve.' (ibid: 135) 'Listening without prejudice', achieved through bracketing, is, I would insist, the discipline that is absolutely essential to validating qualitative research because it entails a suspension of all pre-formed prejudices and a 'naïve acceptance' of a described lifeworld in order to make sense of commonly occurring, unquestioned phenomena. Through conversational interaction then it becomes possible to value local knowledge as a social, conversational dimension comes into play to facilitate willingness to compare and share attitudes and experiences from different locations.

4.4.3 The role of Social Constructivism

Finally, Creswell's analysis of a 'social constructivist' approach, which he defines as a worldview in which 'individuals seek understanding of the world within which they live and work...[making] The goal of research, then, to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the situation' (2007: 20) clarifies my data-gathering approach:

In terms of practice, the questions become broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting. Thus, constructivist researchers often address the 'processes' of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants. Researchers recognise that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they 'position themselves' in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural, and historical experiences. Thus the researchers make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background. The researcher's intent, then, is to make sense (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world. (ibid: 21)

Social constructivism, thus described, neatly encompasses the major aspects of my approach, as will be shown in the next section. My open-ended, conversational interview style did in fact allow me to ‘focus on the specific contexts’ of my participants in order to arrive at an understanding of the local influences dominating their professional lives. Furthermore, in positioning myself in regard to this data, I see myself as adopting an interpretive role which is of necessity constrained by my own educational and cultural background.

4.5. Interpreting the data

In interpreting my data, I have been guided by the steps mapped out by Creswell (2007), along the phenomenological route. Creswell analyses five qualitative approaches: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Especially relevant to my study is his analysis of phenomenology, although, as Creswell himself suggests (2007: 10) it is possible to blend some or all of these approaches to suit the research topic. My research plan has benefited from the phenomenology-derived concept of ‘clustering’ in which, in Creswell’s definition, ‘the researcher clusters the statements into themes, or meaning units, removing overlapping or repetitive statements’ (ibid: 235). The emergence of these themes, concerning, in one example, attitudes to critical thinking, or in another, feelings about using English outside the classroom, has influenced decisions about choice of topics for the data analysis chapters and, consequently, served to provide details for the broad directions already sketched pertaining to such topics as ‘professional identity’ or ‘native-speakerism’. Additional techniques, such as reconstruction and thick description, have been drawn on to fine-tune my discussion of these and other topics.

4.5.1 Using reconstruction

A further layer of complexity is uncovered in Holliday’s (2004) discussion of a ‘progressivist’ approach involving reconstruction of data – ‘a facility for distilling diverse qualitative data within consolidated texts.’ 2004: (abstract) One of the most exciting features outlined here is the liberation from postpositivist paradigms, which allows the researcher:

... to engage strategically and creatively with the complexities of realities that go beyond her initial design. Indeed, it is by trying reflexively to understand what happens when, as an inevitable consequence of being there, she disturbs the surface

of the culture she is investigating, that the researcher is in a position to dig deeper and reveal the hidden and the counter. (2004: 278)

Being aware of these possibilities encourages me to push beyond the horizons of my research panorama and consider what went before the interactions I have initiated, what happens in the process, and what is likely to ensue. To pin this observation to an example from my own research, in which I am beginning to catch glimpses of the ‘hidden and the counter’, I shall briefly describe a recent incident. Among the overseas doctoral students at the university where I currently work are a small group of Thai tertiary teachers who rarely use English to communicate among themselves. An Australian fellow-researcher commented to me on this use of first language, saying that if she was in the position of being in a country where the language she was studying was the first language, she would take every opportunity to make sure she used it, even with colleagues from her own country. Being a little curious, I asked one of the Thai students whether she ever used English with her colleagues and she replied that they felt it unnatural to speak English together, so they preferred not to. There are important questions here regarding professional identity and other issues which I shall be able to discuss further as I unravel the topics generated in my data but for the moment it seems appropriate to question who has the right to make pronouncements about what anyone should or should not do in their own professional interest.

To some extent, this incident is an example of a counter-culture indicating resistance to dominant beliefs and analyzing it alongside data from my interviews will take me in the direction of ‘studies of the unrecognised identities and autonomy of teachers and students from perceivedly ‘non-Western cultures’ (Holliday, 2004: 277) with the aim of removing hitherto seldom questioned Western perceptions. After all, English language teaching in this era of ‘cultural globalization’ (cf Kumaravadivelu, 2008a) has to be seen as a global, rather than a local phenomenon, and as such, subject to global influences.

4.5.2 Thick description

The ethnographer Geertz developed the term ‘thick description’ to explain the task of the researcher:

The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on its author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement... to which unfamiliar acts arising out of unknown backgrounds naturally give rise. (1973: 246)

Thick description, then, requires an interpretation of context showing the interconnectedness of events. 'It is by recognising how connections between people, beliefs, images, traditions, etc. operate within a small social setting, that the 'collective representations' that thick description aims to reveal ... can be seen' (Holliday, 2007a: 75). A further example of thick description may be found in Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* (1994: Chapter 2). Ghosh describes his experience of living in an Egyptian village for the purpose of learning Arabic. The villagers have had little contact with the outside world and had their own understanding of how far a non-Muslim could be accepted into their society, and their own prejudices about the identities of Others. They pursue Ghosh relentlessly with questions about his country, India, which highlight the lack of understanding about another culture that often accompanies satisfaction and complacency about one's own. They are particularly concerned with what they have heard about the custom of burning the dead on funeral pyres, an outrage to the human body which horrifies their Muslim beliefs. In explaining the difficulties he experiences dealing with the villagers' questions, Ghosh describes a linguistic issue, and it is important here to remember that he is a language learner in this context, a young man learning Arabic for his doctoral research:

... but since I had not succeeded in finding a word such as 'cremate' in Arabic, I knew I would have to give my assent to the term that Khamees had used: the verb 'to burn', which was the word for what happened to firewood and straw and the eternally damned. (1994: 168)

In recounting this episode, Ghosh has illustrated his ethnographic skills by adding a linguistic depth. Understanding the difference between 'burn' and 'cremate' was the key to explaining the villagers' antipathy to the burning of bodies. Thus an important connection was established which enriched this ethnographic description.

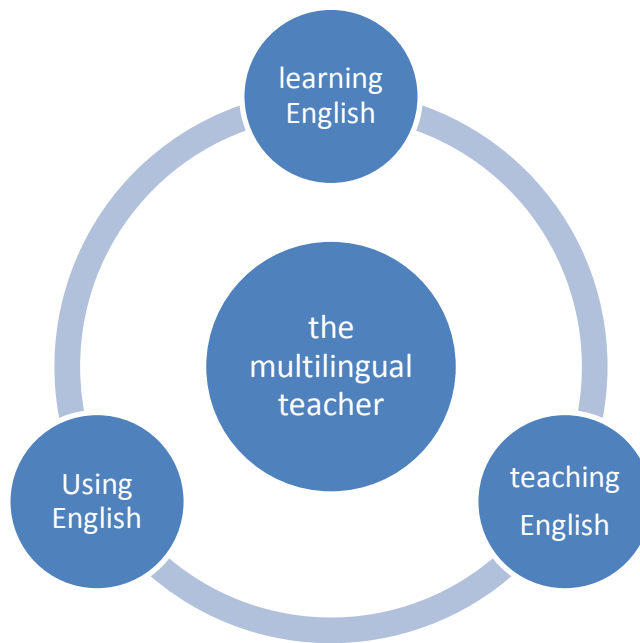
In an Antique Land is also an example of how a researcher brings her own background to bear in her research, as well as showing a developing relationship between a researcher and his participants.

Zhagloul and Khamees were eccentrics in most things, and in nothing so much as this, that for them the world outside was still replete with the wonders of the unknown. That was why our friendship was so quickly sealed. (ibid: 174)

The participants portrayed are secondary to Ghosh's main research, which is centred around the identity of an Indian slave, tantalisingly and briefly mentioned in his master's letters as 'slave and business agent, a respected member of his household' (p.18) and this research into the lives of 12th century merchants is the reason for Ghosh learning Arabic. However, while pursuing his research, he has made brilliant use of his time in the village of Lataifa to record the modern day characters he meets and his records of his interactions have some relevance for qualitative researchers because of the skill with which he selects and describes events. This is a work of literature, not a research thesis so it is free of the requirements of the academic genre; nonetheless, it demonstrates a way of constructing reality with purpose which is akin to the qualitative researcher's aim to make sense of the context being observed. The illustrative power of the incident derives from its position in a world beyond that being currently studied for it shows how awareness of a cultural setting may be acquired through using available clues, such as language, to arrive at an understanding of a phenomenon, as is done through thick description.

4.5.3 Adapting this tool to my research

For me, thick description is a vital tool in the interpretive process, beginning with the organisation of the data analysis chapters, which can be clarified in the following diagram:



This is a simplified format which will be developed further as the data analysis progresses. For now, it is an illustration of thick description because it shows the interconnectedness of the activities providing information about our understanding of the multilingual teacher, although, in this case, knowledge comes primarily from the teachers themselves, rather than a wide range of informants associated with the context. However, the variety of teacher backgrounds and the range of activities covered contribute to establishing the interconnectedness characterising thick description. Each of the three activities will be explored in depth and the features they include will be shown to have multiple connections across the range. For example, in chapter 5, participants describe their memories of learning English. These memories contribute to a thick description of teaching English, in chapter 7, when some participants refer back to their own learning and describe how it influences their teaching. The connection between learning and teaching is illustrated by Phil1f, who observes

I think I learnt more about the language because I read in English and that's one of the things that I encouraged my students who were really struggling – I would tell them you have to read in the language as well. (Phil1f: see Chapter 7, p.163)

Making connections of this nature is part of thick description because it supplies information beyond the immediate activities being described, showing how I am able to build up a picture of

the strengths of multilingual teachers. The acts described may not be as ‘puzzling’ as those alluded to by Geertz (see page 92, above) but, having learnt in Chapter 5 that Phil1f started reading ‘early on’ (See page 116), the reader is led to connect the experiences in teachers’ lives to answering the research questions.

Furthermore, the various interactions between researcher and participants from a wide selection of local contexts enables the building up of a picture which contains what Holliday describes as ‘verisimilitude’: ‘What makes the thick description of a social phenomenon possible is not its exhaustiveness of coverage, but the way in which it scans the different facets of the social matrix or culture in which it is found, and comes up with good analysis’. (2007a: 75) In the short example above, understanding of how multilingual teachers develop English teaching expertise is increased; the reader begins by learning that Phil1f was encouraged to read by her mother and then, at a later stage in the data analysis, finds that this memory was applied to the development of teaching skills. The researcher has used thick description, i.e. the drawing out of interconnected events, to make a point from the data.

4.6. How the research was conducted

This is a qualitative study, as has been described, with a strongly interpersonal focus, reflected in the final title, ‘Learning from the experiences of multilingual teachers of English.’ At the outset of the study, I wished to highlight the issues surrounding the native/non-native speaker dichotomy and with this aim I devised the first title ‘investigating and describing the linguistic and cultural expertise of bi- and multilingual teachers of English with the aim of suggesting ways of incorporating this expertise in English language teaching programs around the world’. The aim is still implicitly there but as the data collection process developed, a shift in emphasis became obvious, itself adding validity to the choice of methodology. The methodological underpinnings are described elsewhere in this chapter, but the choice of recording conversational interviews as the main means of data collection is strongly allied to my growing interest in learning about approaches to English teaching by individuals working in contexts less familiar to me, and to others like me. Not that I ever lacked this interest, but it needed to be more clearly articulated at a level which allowed for a view of what Canagarajah has described as ‘the individual, the local and the particular’ (1999b: 41-42). Thus the grand sweep through the ‘native/non-native speaker dichotomy’ had to be diverted so that I could listen more carefully to

what my informants were telling me. A consideration of this dichotomy would still be important but another dichotomy was assuming prominence in the research: that of the ‘local versus the ‘global’. In fact, the experiences recounted by my participants were beginning to reveal how what are frequently understood to be global preoccupations take on a different meaning in local contexts. Recognising the relevance of describing local attributes of a global profession led to a revision of the thesis title to ‘Learning from the experiences of multilingual teachers of English’. I now had a title which captured the interactive nature of the data collection, since the importance of the participants’ knowledge was now firmly thrust into the limelight. Verbs such as ‘investigating’ or ‘exploring’ appeared less appropriate because they suggested that I was the only individual involved in the research. Although I have to take responsibility for the thesis, the act of ‘learning’ acknowledges a source, which is found in my participants, and so the recording of conversations is justified.

4.6.1 The participants

The research topic, in its previous as well as current form, required interaction with ‘multilingual’ teachers of English and it was stated in the research proposal that the research would be carried out ‘among overseas and immigrant students studying on postgraduate teaching programs at South Australia’s three universities’. This is broadly what happened, except that only two Australian universities were involved rather than three, and a third location was at a UK university, where I interviewed three Chinese students who were taking some of their MA units overseas. The common denominator for the participants, then, was that they all came from countries where English was not the language most frequently spoken, and, at the time of the interviews, they were undertaking some form of postgraduate TESOL study in an English-speaking country (Australia or the UK). It could be added that they all came from ‘Asian’ countries but the adjective ‘Asian’ is used in such a wide variety of contexts that its meaning is too diffuse to allow any precision. Some inhabitants of the UK, for example, are likely to equate ‘Asian’ with ‘Pakistani’ while Australians are more likely to think ‘Vietnamese’ and the juxtaposition of these two countries immediately shows the unmanageable range covered by this epithet. Additional interesting background is that some of the participants had taken their masters degrees in English speaking countries, either US or Australia. With only two exceptions at the time of the interviews, all were intending to return to their home universities. The

‘approximate years of experience’ indicates a range of ages and levels, appropriate for considering a cross-section of professionals. This information is relevant for validating my research into multilingual teachers and contextual knowledge, although data from the two participants intending to stay in Australia was also valuable for its retrospective impact, showing a depth of intercultural awareness. The main distinguishing features of the participants are shown in the following Table of Participants.

Table 1: Table of Participants

Coded id (See Table 2 below)	Nationality	Currently engaged in (at time of interview)	Years teaching (Approx.)	Interview date	Previous <i>o'seas study</i>	Future plans
Thai 1f	Thailand	PhD in Aus	30	12 Nov 2007	Masters, Aus	Return to home university job
Thai2f	Thailand	PhD in Aus	5	12 Nov 2007		Return to home university job
Thai3f	Thailand	PhD in Aus	3	12 Feb 2008		Return to home university job
Thai4f	Thailand	PhD in Aus	5	12 Feb 2008	Masters, US	Return to home university job
Thai5f	Thailand	PhD in Aus	5	1 Apr 2008		Return to home university job
Sing1f	Singapore	PhD in Aus	30	23 May 2008	Masters, Aust	Remain in Aus
Sing2m	Singapore	PhD in Aus	15	11 Jun 2008	Masters, US	Return to home university job
Chin1f	China	MA in China	10	8 Aug 2008		Return to home university job
Chin2f	China	MA in China	10	8 Aug 2008		Return to home university job
Chin3f	China	MA in China	7	7 Aug 2008		Return to home university job
Chin4m	China	PhD in Aus	22	25 Nov 2008		Return to home university job
Indi1f	India	MA in Aus	6	30 May 2008		Remain in Aus
Phil1f	Philippines	PhD in Aus	15	18 Dec 2008	Masters, US	Return to home university job
Indo1f	Indonesia	PhD in Aus	15	27 Nov 2008		Return to home university job
Viet1m	Vietnam	PhD in Aus	10	6 May 2009	Masters, Aust	Return to home university job

To preserve anonymity, participants are identified according to nationality, number of participants of that nationality, and gender. Hence ‘Thai1f’ refers to a female participant from Thailand, who is distinguished from other Thai females by adding a number to her nationality and gender. The participants comprise three males and eleven females, reflecting the gender balance among postgraduate students in TESOL. The list of 15 participants are identified as follows:

Table 2: Coding of participants

Country	Code
China	Chin1f
	Chin2f
	Chin3f
	Chin4m
Singapore	Sing1f
	Sing2m
Indonesia	Indo1f
India	Indi1f
Philippines	Phil1f
Vietnam	Viet1m
Thailand	Thai1f
	Thai2f
	Thai3f
	Thai4f
	Thai5f

4.6.2 First point of contact

In order to locate possible participants, I approached the coordinators, both known to me, of TESOL programs at two of Adelaide’s universities and was invited to address the overseas students at one institution while at the other, I was invited to become a member of the newly established ‘TESOL researchers group’ (February 2007). The latter arrangement proved the more successful, and not only did I re-establish contact with a former MA student, now taking time off from her home university to complete her PhD in Australia, but I developed a rapport with a number of other PhD candidates, who became willing participants to my research. From

this group, over a period of about two years, I obtained more than half my data, through interviews and notes in my research diary.

This subgroup of nine participants comprised the group best known to me, since I was able to meet with them on a regular basis, although I was not teaching them (which would have contravened local ethics protocols). In addition, I was fortunate enough to be put in touch with three other participants, the first of whom, just beginning a PhD program, encouraged two of her acquaintances, one a PhD candidate and the other studying for her Masters in TESOL by distance at another Australian university while teaching in Adelaide. Thus, although I only met these three participants for the purpose of gathering data, I found communicating with them on a professional level equally rewarding, as they were no less forthcoming in their willingness to share their varied experiences of learning, using and teaching English. It was therefore unnecessary, given the scope of this study, to consider differences in the relationships established, as it would be difficult to establish these factors as having any bearing on the nature of the information obtained, which depended, rather, on the backgrounds and experiences of each individual. Likewise, the three Chinese students whom I interviewed in the UK had only made my acquaintance when I was teaching them during the few weeks they were in the country, but they volunteered their time freely and provided a range of insights into their professional backgrounds.

4.6.3 Location of interviews

All of the interviews were conducted in relatively informal environments, in indoor or outdoor cafes adjoining or on the university campuses or in empty classrooms. Two were conducted outdoors in warm, sunny conditions in the university grounds, always with the obvious aim of finding situations which were comfortable for conversational interaction. The use of a digicorder did not seem to stem the flow of conversation and all participants answered questions at length, in a relaxed manner, with touches of humour so that transcripts showed maximum input from interviewees, in response to my non-scripted but thematic inquiries.

In three cases, interviews were conducted in pairs, as this was the preference expressed by participants, who in these cases were friends and colleagues, two pairs from Thailand, and one from China. My first interview was a paired one, with a Thai Head of Department and a junior

lecturer. The question of rank did not seem to be at all problematic, as the two worked together in a research office in Australia and moreover, the junior colleague volunteered information about her relationship with her 'boss' in Thailand compared with Australia. The second pair were also Thais, who were more or less equal in status and who had formed a close friendship over the time they had worked together, shown through various interjections during the interviews, e.g. 'she was the top student', as one would compliment the other. The situation was similar with my third paired interview, conducted in the UK several months later, with two friends from China who also complimented each other: 'she is the most popular teacher', for example. In this way, reminiscences were enhanced and supported in interesting ways which, although not essential to the gathering of knowledge, provided personal levels of depth and meaning.

4.6.4 The advantages of shared goals

As all of my participants were higher degree students, most of them gathering or about to gather their own research data, we had a common ground to start from. They understood the research culture because they were attending universities which had similar academic requirements and they recognised the steps in the process I was following. This made the recording of interviews a fairly straightforward procedure; placing a small digicorder on the table did not appear to be an inhibiting factor; participants took the procedure in their stride and were willing to answer all questions put to them. There was even room for humour in some interviews, particularly with paired interviewees, who were able to share reminiscences and compare attitudes in their own countries, which, I felt, added another level to my understanding of their experiences. A shared awareness of academic expectations, then, smoothed over the data collection process, forming a useful bridge from a common knowledge to the unknown and the mysterious which I was seeking to explore with their guidance

4.6.5 Content outline

Since the aim, as discussed elsewhere, was always to isolate 'the local, the particular and the individual', my questions, following a more 'conversational' style, evolved in response to information offered by respondents. For example, the first interview I conducted, as mentioned above with Thai senior and junior colleagues, developed out of observations made by the junior

colleague during a postgraduate seminar where she mentioned issues concerning her disappointment with ‘native speaker’ teachers she had worked with. My primary interest in these early stages was with the ‘native/non-native speaker’ dichotomy and so a good part of this first interview was taken up with discussion of this matter, about which the participant had strong feelings. For this reason, it was fortuitous that Thai2f’s colleague was also present, as her experiences with ‘native speakers’ came from a more benign direction as their superior. Approximately eighteen months later, in a sequel to this interview after time spent data-gathering in Thailand, Thai1f volunteered a second interview to discuss her recent experience with a native speaker colleague who had provided a considerable degree of assistance. Ethics protocols prevented me taking advantage of all the information offered, as it formed part of Thai1f’s own research but I was able to expand on the earlier interview with some general notes about institutional relations with foreign ‘native-speaker’ staff and also about her own English learning experiences. Naturally occurring opportunities of this kind broadened the scope of the data because they enabled me to record reactions and interactions as part of an ongoing professional relationship, thus providing further evidence of the ‘global’ becoming part of the ‘local’ in ways which need to be more fully documented.

4.6.6 Adapting the research questions

My research questions underwent a number of changes before acquiring their final form (although the underlying themes were always there) but the process of conducting interviews, being a collaborative one, led to the uncovering of unexpected themes. To give an example, having started out with a research question asking ‘How can the emphasis on defining teachers of English as ‘native’ or ‘non-native’ speakers be reduced in favour of recognising professional training and linguistic knowledge?’ I came to realise after the first few interviews that this question was extremely broad, as was its replacement: ‘Does the categorisation of ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ continue to have relevance in the changing context of ELT?’ The first of these questions, it seemed, looked to factors external to the research participants, instead of focusing on their contributions, while the second required an investigation which would take me beyond the sphere of the local, which had sparked my enthusiasm in the first place. Once I understood the importance of the interconnected fields of learning, using and teaching English, as they began to emerge through the questions I had asked, it became appropriate to re-formulate the question

as ‘How do multilingual teachers of English view English in countries where it is not the first language?’ By making the active subject of my question ‘multilingual teachers’ I succeeded in highlighting the individuals whose experiences constituted my corpus of data and so the contribution of this study, as illuminating the role of English in multilingual communities, where it is taught by multilingual teachers, is made clear.

Refining the research questions, then, was a task requiring constant surveillance and the necessary focus could only be achieved by constantly asking myself two major questions: 1) what do I want to know and 2) how is it helpful in expanding knowledge in the field. In this way, it became possible to develop a line of inquiry which would take me beyond existing knowledge into an area which it was valuable and important to investigate.

After my first interview in late 2007, most data was collected through interviews during 2008 as shown in the table above, with the final interview being recorded in May 2009. Inevitably, there were some changes throughout this period but, in terms of content, as required by the discipline of a qualitative research topic, there was a clearly delineated area to be covered. Thus, after I had finished transcribing all of the data (some of which I used in conference presentations along the way to clarify my thinking), I was able to define the three main areas of activity which were covered by all interviews, and which gave structure to the data analysis chapters: learning, using and teaching English. Closer thematic investigation revealed differences within these spheres of activity; for example, ‘learning English’ was a totally different process in postcolonial societies than in countries where English had never been imposed in the ‘colonial’ era. Hence the broad question, ‘When did you start learning English?’ produced a diversity of responses which had to be explored according to individual experiences, bringing us back to the guiding notion of ‘the individual, the local and the particular’. It was not, however, possible to make a clear separation between ‘colonial’ and ‘postcolonial’ societies with respect to any of these activities because, to take another example from reminiscences of learning English, there were perceptible similarities, such as family influences which were common to a diverse range of cultures and societies.

4.7. Constructing the data analysis chapters

The content shifts from the personal to the professional to the contextual and back again in no particular order during the course of each interview, reflecting the nature of interpersonal communication, as well as the dominant themes of the thesis, bound up as they are with understanding local experiences. The data will thus be shown to support the belief that learning, using and teaching English takes place in such diverse circumstances that it is no longer possible for hitherto globally accepted practices to be universally applied without modification. Furthermore, the easily adopted habit of accepting certain professional attitudes without thinking is challenged by close consideration of participant comments, although throughout this analysis I need to continually be aware why I have chosen to respond in the way I have, not only for the purpose of answering the research questions but also to clarify the role of the researcher in the interactions studied.

The structure is dependent on the identification of themes common to all participants through the use of certain keywords, including ‘local’, ‘foreign’, ‘cultural’, ‘identity’ and with regard to teaching, ‘CLT’/’communicative methods’/ ‘communicative competence’, ‘literature’, and ‘grammar’. Drawing the themes out from what is often referred to as the ‘messiness’ of raw data (cf. Holliday, 2007a: 90ff) involved a process of connecting ideas expressed by participants to keywords not necessarily used in the data. For example, ‘literature’ was a keyword used by all participants except two. I could therefore count the incidences of the word and include them in a table, showing how often each participant mentioned it. Some terms, on the other hand, required another layer of interpretation; ‘enthusiasm’ as another example, was not actually used in the data but it appears in chapter subheadings because there are many instances where participants express their fondness for English study. Mechanical counting of keywords, then, was not sufficient for data organisation and I needed to use methods such as ‘clustering’ (cf. Creswell, 2007 see 4.5.1 above) to shape the data into manageable themes. The themes were then used to guide the organisation of the chapters, which began chronologically, adopting a narrative approach with ‘memories of learning English’. With this entry into the data, the essential human element, focusing on multilingual teachers, was established. The headings in the data chapters reflect the ‘story’ told by the interviews, linking the first impressions of English to its use in participants’ lives in their particular contexts and this thread continues through to the

development of professional skills and interests. The keywords listed earlier show where the emphasis lies, so that ‘local’ and ‘foreign’ can be seen to relate to the theme of contextual knowledge, while ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ highlight the attention paid to the participants as individuals, illustrating the contrast between ‘interior’ and ‘exterior’

For each of the data analysis chapters, I copied relevant sections of the data into new files, which made comparisons between speakers more manageable. Although I avoided mechanical methods of analysis, which, I believe, would have clouded the meaning of individual responses and gone against the aims of the research, I found programs such as Onenote helpful for remembering accurately the origin of selected pieces of data, which answered the research questions in enlightening and unexpected ways.

The overall process of data gathering and analysis, then, progressed from an examination of the transcribed interviews, which were sifted through to find major themes, to the organisation of themes as chapter headings, which in turn gave direction to the structure of the final chapters. As a result of this process of sifting, retaining and discarding, the main findings emerged with clarity as previously unnoticed perceptions came to light as powerful statements.

4.8. Problems and limitations

This study was limited by certain practical considerations which inhibited its global embrace. Firstly, the understanding of local contexts depended on descriptions of those contexts by their inhabitants as it was economically impossible for me to visit all of them during the course of this thesis. This limitation could be turned to advantage however, if we reconsider the title ‘Learning from multilingual teachers ...’ During my career I have visited some of the countries highlighted but the information presented here is derived from the participants themselves as, listening to them in Australia or the UK, I had no choice but to learn from their interpretation, without imposing my own view of the context as I perceived it. In this study, the interaction with the participants was at the core and the contribution to knowledge came from them, albeit mediated by me as the researcher.

Secondly, there is a related limitation of place given the much discussed global nature of English teaching, as I have only been able to speak to participants from nine countries. The choice of these countries was not a guiding factor in the study. What counted was that a range of countries

where the teaching of English is seen as important was represented. The countries included were the result of particular arrangements at the universities I was involved in and therefore the geographic spread was a naturally occurring consequence of my own professional life.

Finally, the above factors prevent any other valid sources of data collection than conversational interviews and the maintaining of a research diary. Once again, I will argue that this limitation becomes an advantage if it is related to the research questions which seek to illuminate aspects of local teaching practices and contexts. The reliability of interview data can be argued to depend on an element of trust established between interviewer and interviewee in the process of co-constructing data. In the interview situation, it is possible to assume that interviewees are providing what they believe to be reliable answers to the interviewer's prompts. According to Block,

The conceptualization of interviews as co-constructions means that interview data are seen not as reflections of underlying memory but as voices adopted by research participants in response to the researcher's prompts and questions. These voices might or might not truly represent what the research participant thinks or would choose to say in another context and on another occasion. (2011:759)

The current discourse community of ELT sets up certain expectations about how research interviews are conducted and in the light of the above comment, the voices adopted by the participants offer information which can be accepted as valid because it reflects what is known about the community, while adding to that knowledge. For example, a participant describing early memories of learning English increases understanding of a known activity by expressing enthusiasm for English and this opinion is validated when it is referred to later in the interview by being given as a reason for becoming an English teacher. The information is possibly volunteered because the interviewee knows that it will be acceptable in this particular situation but it is also supported by the subsequent career choice and various anecdotes woven through the data.

Necessarily, the study is mediated by my voice as researcher interpreting what I hear but I have described my own background and experience in the introduction (Chapter1) to establish the guiding influences in this study. Within this framework, the balance I have always sought to achieve required an acknowledgement of my own prejudices and beliefs, alongside an acceptance that it is impossible to ‘allow’ the data to speak for me, because I have been responsible for, firstly, asking the questions, even if I have called these interviews ‘conversational’, and secondly, I have chosen to organise the thesis in a certain way, albeit guided by what has been said to me. Hence, while conforming to the principles of qualitative research described above, I have had to consider the ongoing relationship between myself and my participants and how best to use that relationship to obtain the knowledge required for this research. My approach is supported by Holliday’s characterisation of the qualitative researcher as:

... a person who is trying to understand others in the social setting in which she is carrying out her research. As such, she is a person who is trying to understand others, but must do this through the way in which they interact with her (Chapter 7) – just like anyone else who is relating to new people, or indeed friends and colleagues she has known for longer but whom she must still struggle to understand. (2007a: 181)

The features of researcher activity highlighted here – ‘understand others’, ‘interact’, relate to new people’ - have a particular relevance for my research because they refer to ways of engaging socially with people as we do when we conduct interviews in a semi –structured, qualitative approach. Regarding the ‘social setting’ for the data collection, I have already outlined the three ways in which I made contact with my participants and suggested that different levels of acquaintance did not seem to affect the content of the interviews. This is because the interviews were always of a professional nature, although informal within that field. Length of acquaintance with individuals ranged from a ‘one-off’ meeting to several years, but over the several years, meetings were infrequent and always occurred in a professional, academic setting. Had I been interviewing colleagues who were close friends, the results would almost certainly have been different, because there would have been the surrounding panoply of shared interests and background social experiences impacting on the tone of the data.

4.9. Ethics considerations

I adopted a fairly low-key approach to my request for participants, providing, initially, a statement of my research topic, which in the research group where I found most of my participants fell easily within the bounds of the setting. My three other Adelaide participants were found by email contact, first established through a colleague, while the three participants in Canterbury responded to a verbal request I made to their class at the end of their course. Each participant and I then jointly signed and dated a statement giving their consent to be recorded anonymously for information relevant to the research topic and asserting their rights to withdraw their consent at any time. They were also offered the opportunity to read, follow up or discuss the progress of my research at any time. Although I have had some brief conversations with some of the participants since the data collection interviews, constraints on their time as PhD students having to write a thesis and return to their jobs in their home universities, often caring for children along the way, meant that it would have been very difficult for them to dedicate too many hours to research projects outside their own. In any case, as subsequent chapters will show, they had provided me with a rich variety of themes to explore.

4.10. Summarising my approach to qualitative research

Holliday (2004) uses examples from a number of studies, including his own, to show that research findings may be strengthened by reference to a ‘periphery’ of data outside the core setting. This concept is essential for reminding ourselves as researchers that we belong to a wider world where we desire to have impact. After all, the whole point of research in the social sciences is to demonstrate how certain phenomena impact on individual lives.

To some extent, I have been able to use literature to validate my ‘core’ setting because I am able to show that the same preoccupations about the nature of human interaction have also been dealt with by novelists keen to expose the injustice which has created periphery communities. Since the world inhabited by the novelist is often vastly different to that of the academic researcher, in terms of goals and settings, which are virtually unlimited, it validates and enriches a research topic to see it discussed in other fields, because it is then clear that the topic has a life beyond what the researcher has endowed it with. To summarise, whatever the setting for social science research, the researcher must not lose sight of the fact that research is being carried out in what I

would like to call the ‘here and now’ of contemporary existence, which is what we all know best. Our interpretation of contemporary existence, however, is dependent on what we have learned from the past, in the same way as an artist working today is influenced by those who are acknowledged to have changed the direction of art over the centuries, whether Giotto, Monet or Picasso. The way to follow in the relatively new qualitative research in language studies/applied linguistics has been mapped out by researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln, Gubrium, Creswell, Holliday, who have successfully crossed a variety of disciplines to build a research approach which is strengthened by, particularly, a more highly developed sense of how reflexivity contributes to knowledge. Furthermore, qualitative research in the social sciences offers more flexible tools for understanding human behaviour and interaction, which is not really quantifiable according to previously accepted positivist paradigms.

My approach to qualitative research in this thesis has required taking the following steps, after initiating conversation with participants:

Ask

Listen

Transcribe

Reflect

Interpret

Draw conclusions which reveal hidden complexity

Listening with care and attention allowed interpretation at a local level, resulting from the intense experience of shared interaction in which the researcher is influenced by the words and the presence of the participants to present a co-constructed view of a particular lifeworld. In the stages of ‘reflecting, interpreting and drawing conclusions’, I have adapted Creswell’s description of making an ‘interpretation shaped by my own experiences and background’ (See p.90, above). Allied to this process, support is found in Kvale’s insistence on conversational interaction as ‘human interaction’ (see p.89, above).

To provide an example of how this approach, which emphasises the phenomenological method described above (Section 4.4), worked, I will discuss a sample from my data.

4.11. An example of data analysis

The first step in this whole investigation was accomplished by establishing not only shared values, but also values which could be easily appreciated, so if a participant says ‘I really liked Chaucer’, then I may respond because I also enjoyed studying Chaucer, whereas if she says ‘I liked linguistics’ and I feel differently, I can nonetheless appreciate her preference. It is through this sharing of experiences that participants become knowable individuals and a relationship of trust is founded. In this extract, English literature, which was seen by many participants as an important aspect of their language learning, is being discussed:

Interviewer: What period of English literature did you like most?

Participant: Oh, I don’t know- probably from Chaucer

Int: Oh did you? because that was my special area when I did English.

Part: And I loved Shakespeare (yes) but I didn’t like Indian literature, which is vey ironic that I don’t, that I didn’t like Indian literature

Int: Do you like it now?

Part: Not really- probably a few like Anita Desai, or who else –I forgot the names (Indi1f)

The qualitative approach is encapsulated here, as the researcher uses her own background to build a relationship with the participant and the conversation is developed as a kind of partnership, sharing values which, at the same time, are chosen by the researcher reacting to the participant. A level of complexity was reached when this common interest in literature was picked up further on in the conversation and became a kind of springboard to develop for showing particular attitudes to teaching and culture. I had chosen to group the data according to the three activities of learning, teaching and using English but the evolving themes traversed these. Literature, for example, as discussed above, first emerged when participants discussed their learning experiences but it also featured in discussions of using and teaching English. Literature then, prompted some answers to the research questions, especially question 2 (regarding the place of English) where it provided information about cultural background and the relevance of certain themes. This participant’s comments about literature paved the way for a discussion about the influence of ‘foreign literature’, which became section 5.5.3 of Chapter 5 ‘Learning English’.

This is one example of how a thematic analysis was conducted. It reveals how a certain keyword in the conversations, such as ‘literature’ shed light on certain other key themes, such as ‘culture.’ Other themes, which emerge in the data analysis, were developed in similar ways.

4.12. Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology constructed to gather and analyse data for this study. Close links have been shown to exist between the topic and its investigation with emphasis on the interpersonal generation of data and the need to acknowledge the researcher’s role as integral to both the collection and interpretation of data. The flexibility of qualitative research approaches has been exploited to allow for a meaningful contribution to knowledge, as will be shown in the succeeding chapters on Learning, Using and Teaching English. The way these themes have dictated the development of an analytical approach, with help from research tools such as bracketing, reconstruction and thick description, has also been described as further evidence of how qualitative research enables research investigators to probe lived experience in their search for new knowledge. The forces dominating the development of an appropriate methodology have evolved from an awareness of the researcher’s influence, and how reflexivity operates, together with a strong desire to represent lived experience beyond that of the researcher. With this aim the importance of conversational interaction, supported by social constructivism, has been evaluated as the most suitable means of obtaining the data needed for this topic’s expansion.

The succeeding chapters will illustrate how methodology and content have been bound together to produce an interpretation of the lived experiences of multilingual teachers. The data is presented without reference to related theory because this is dealt with in Chapter 8, the aim in chapters 5, 6, and 7 being to allow the data to speak for itself without interruption from published research. Then, in Chapter 8, issues raised by participants will be commented on further, showing the importance accorded to these issues by researchers.

CHAPTER 5 LEARNING ENGLISH

5.1. Introduction

This data analysis is arranged with the individual at the core, recounting their earliest language learning experiences. Surrounding this core of learning are local contextual influences, identified as family, other languages and education systems. Another layer extending beyond the immediate local environment contains cultural influences stemming from exposure to English and hence perceived as outside of familiar cultural practices. A step further takes participants geographically away from their own cultures when they travel abroad for study and are able to reflect on different learning contexts. Finally all of these experiences are shown to reveal aspects of the attitudes and identities of English teachers globally, establishing a basis for understanding professional diversity.

5.2. Memories of learning English

‘Good fun, good fun – I love it!’ (Thai5f).

Thai5f’s brief response to a question about her memories of English learning encapsulates the enthusiasm expressed by most participants for their early experiences.

By drawing on their earliest memories of learning English, participants provide a personal view of how their journeys began. Keywords included recitation, memorization, attraction (of teachers), competitiveness, exam success and, radiating from the recounts, enthusiasm. Aspects of the learning processes described illustrate the levels of engagement with English which have enabled participants to make use of the language for their own professional goals. They exhibit an imaginative degree of perceptiveness as in this further observation by Thai5f: ‘English is like, er, breathing. You have high and low when you speak,’ showing an understanding of intonation as having major differences to a tonal language like Thai.

English teachers who were monolingually trained may not have had the same exposure to language learning, nor, consequently the same opportunities to reflect on how the process works. The impressions recalled were prompted by the questions ‘What are your earliest memories of learning English/when did you first start learning English?’ Impressions fall into three main areas. Firstly, with ‘teaching approaches,’ participants remember how their first teachers

introduced the language. Secondly, ‘interest and enthusiasm’ indicate affective factors and motivation as participants describe how they felt about English and thirdly, in ‘learning strategies’ participants recall strategies they adopted independently. As with ‘interest and enthusiasm’, it is important to note that these memories were not directly prompted but emerged in the course of conversations. This first section, then, focuses strongly on the individual and defines major steps taken in the learning journey.

5.2.1. Teaching approaches

Well, I began to learn English when I was 12 years old. We began with, er, letters and then words and sentences. So the teacher asked us to memorise texts and words and the English teacher made sure that every student can, can recite the text. And um also we had exercises – she would ask us to, to do the exercise after class and then check the answer in class. (Chin2f)

For this student, also from China, there was a similar emphasis, with the addition of group work:

I just remember like when I was in middle school, one of my teachers, she often asked the class, asked us to do some dictation, that’s the texts we have learned and, maybe she often asked us to do some reciting and to recite some famous, very famous, um, paragraphs, and she often asked us to do some group work, to do brainstorming. (Chin3f)

There is a nice touch of irony as this Chinese participant recalls drills he was subjected to, while also acknowledging the importance of recitation and memorisation:

When I first studied English, it was very difficult for me – I remember my teacher taught me in this way: ‘There was a book, ‘this is a door, this is a window, this is a dog...’this is a desk, this is a blackboard’ (Is this a blackboard?) Yeah, is that a blackboard? Is that a man? I still remember it – very interesting in the dialogue, er, there were several people in my family – my mother, my father, my brother, my sister. My mother is a woman. (laugh)...

Now the situation is different. Because of the introduction of various theories of language teaching and learning, it seems that the pattern drill is out of date - and when I was learning English recitation was very important, reading and recitation was very important. (Chin4m)

Chin4m’s own learning history here neatly summarises changes in ELT methodology. His examples show the influence of the ‘language-centred approach’ before it gave way to the

‘learner-centred’, or communicative approach (cf. Kumaravadivelu, 2006b). In common with other Chinese participants, he also recalls the importance of memorisation and recitation.

Since all of these participants have ably demonstrated their language skills at postgraduate level, as well as through their employment, it would appear that belittling the role of memorization and recitation in language learning might be a little hasty and more detailed research of how English is learnt in diverse contexts is warranted. Discarding learning approaches because they do not fit the current CLT mould could be another example of throwing the baby out with the bathwater (to be discussed further in Chapter 7).

For these Thai participants, learning began earlier: ‘I remember er, our first class and the teacher taught us to remember 3 words, cat, rat and bat.’ (Thai3f) This memory emphasises the importance of positive beginnings, with language learning as much as with any other learning.

5.2.2. Interest and enthusiasm

Among most participants there seems to have been strong intrinsic or integrative motivation, as they declared an attachment to language learning:

And I guess personally I love language – I love Chinese and I love Chinese literature and I guess this love of literature and language itself is transferred to English because it’s also a language I also want to just be good at. (Chin1f)

For some, however, what remained as a memory was the fact that English was compulsory so the question of liking the subject had little relevance: ‘I don’t think that um, you didn’t like English but it was a compulsory course.’ (Thai4f)

A sense of achievement was important and sometimes this was due to the teacher:

I still remember that I enjoyed grammar because my teacher, now my colleague, my teacher really – he taught the grammar well, OK? I liked the way he taught us, maybe because my achievement was good so I felt that I liked it at that time yes, but not speaking – I can’t speak well – I couldn’t speak well so I didn’t feel happy with my achievement - (Indo1f).

Being good at English, as might be expected, was an important part of many reminiscences and in some cases, there were comparisons with other languages:

I didn't have any grounding in English really. Before I started primary school. And that is something that you know I could never really figure out – why I had – you know why it came somewhat easy to me erm, you know that's something i could never really understand but i remember being good at both languages and I still remember that I won the book prize when I finished primary school in English and Tamil. I mean if it wasn't for this, for the rewards I probably wouldn't remember any of it that's why I'm highlighting to you –that's what stands out. (Sing2m)

In other cases, it was enough to be good at English without necessarily knowing what future purpose it might serve:

I don't know but for myself I liked English and I think being good at English will benefit me in some way – (yes) at that time I don't know if English will give me a better chance to get a job or not.... I knew that it – I can take advantage of learning English in some ways in some point of time but I didn't know. (Thai5f)

It is possible that this feeling arose from a general enthusiasm for English, which Thai5f has expressed elsewhere: 'English is like – er – breathing – you have up and low when you speak.' This remark about English intonation shows how speakers of other languages may be struck by features of the language that are rarely considered by 'native speakers'.

Sometimes English was instrumental to other interests. The following reminiscence highlights pleasure in reading, regardless of the language:

Towards the end of primary school there was a remarkable transformation happening to me and that's when I really discovered the public library. When I was 11 or 12 I can't remember... unfortunately my father passed away when I was 11 – he died in 1987- so the library was a 15 or 20 minute walk away and I remember walking to the library all the time – spending time there and borrowing books and I remember very clearly reading - and I used to read a lot of books – many, many books in English many books in Tamil so that became – always fiction... It was the story more than anything else. I wanted particularly – I didn't have a goal in mind when I was reading - didn't think –I didn't have in mind something like oh I wanted to improve my English or improve my Tamil no, it was certainly not in my mind at all, it was more, I'm interested in reading as a pleasurable way of passing the time – I enjoyed it, you know and it was as much to read ... (Sing2m)

It could be conjectured that other events, such as his father's early death, led Sing1m to immerse himself in books. The pleasure of discovering books, however, goes beyond cultural background and is a globally shared memory of childhood. Being bilingual gave Sing1m a wider choice of

reading material and switching from one language to another was something he did not have to think about and, as a child he was apparently under no particular pressure to improve his language skills; his choice of language was subject to choice of what he wanted to read.

5.2.3. Learning strategies

Reminiscences about materials used and tactics developed to obtain further practice provide evidence of how the study of English formed part of individual teachers' lives.

I used to read all the textbook before the class had started. I used to read the whole textbook – we had 3 months holidays – I would just read it cover to cover before... all Macmillan and Longman publishers – graded textbooks. But because I learnt in India they had Indian – British Indian stories – how the British came – and they had like a - it was a different sort of literature –very local, everything is local. (Indi1f)

For Indi1f there was a similar pleasure in reading to that recorded by Sing1m above, although for her, the reading was part of the school curriculum. She remembered particularly the 'British Indian' flavour of the content, probably presenting a view of her country's colonial past. The uncertainties that this English dominance gave rise to are discussed further down.

Reading was seen to be important in most contexts and reading material in English was actively sought. Thai5f did not engage with literature but she made use of local press in English to broaden her experience, as well as textbooks for advanced level English tests:

... literature I don't -but I did read newspapers, Bangkok Post, that are available in the library or in the website or I did buy some ...I didn't buy English papers but through the library services and I kept reading like TOEFL, IELTS preparation available manual, books . (Thai5f)

Unlike the participants in the previous section who expressed a fondness for reading, Thai5f seemed to perceive visiting the library as an extension to her study but this in no way diminished her enthusiasm as evidenced by the following comment: 'what are your earliest memories of learning English? Thai5f: I loved it, loved it!' In fact, her motivation led her to search for new strategies to develop her skills, for example, making the most of visitors, whatever the topic of conversation, was perceived to be valuable:

I think for most I met while I was in university with native speakers when you know, there's some group, or exchange group when there were Christian groups they came to the uni canteen and we could talk with them they told us about Jesus or something – I talk with them. If they are native speakers I talk with them. (Thai5f)

Whether she was interested in the topic of conversation or not, Thai5f was willing to engage with English speakers for the purpose of practising her speaking. Likewise, there were opportunities in places popular with tourists in Vietnam:

I spent time walking in the tourist areas and catching the tourists and talking and sometimes having funny experience you know that tourists can sometimes be cautious you know if you say 'can I talk to you a while?' tourists think there must be some kind of trick so I could practise my English speaking and listening too – 'so can you please talk for a while?' (Viet1m)

Viet1m obviously became familiar with tourist ways in his home city, to the extent of finding a way of dealing with tourist reticence to engage with locals. These two examples, in Thailand and Vietnam, show an ability to exploit native speakers, whether missionary or tourist, indicating a degree of control which does not depend on native speakers, but which, on the contrary, allows the learner to make use of the native speaker resource. They also exhibit an impressive level of motivation, allied with a keenness to take learning outside the classroom.

Other strategies, used in the absence of regular conversation partners, were also remembered, illustrating strong motivation:

I often talked to myself in my room, in my own room – in front of the mirror .It helped. In fact it helped but what, the negative thing that I feel from only, you know talking with myself was that it was difficult to talk with others – a bit difficult because when I'm talking to myself you know I have a question and I have the answers and you know – but when I'm talking to my friends I have to make adjustments to switch from one topic to another ... (Indo1f)

Despite admitting shortcomings to her strategy, Indo1f showed herself resourceful enough to make an effort to continue learning in whatever way she could devise. Learner strategies have been widely studied in the literature on second language learning (e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 1996) but most often for the purpose of clarifying for teachers what methods are likely to work. Descriptions of strategies adopted here also serve the purpose of illustrating in what ways

learning English took place outside the classroom in contexts where it was not easy to practise the language. The definition of the ‘multilingual teacher’, then, needs to acknowledge understanding successful cognitive strategies.

On the other hand, a more personal aspect is noted when participants admit the influence of their own personalities:

I am not, not a very socialised person –even now- I don’t speak to people when I am new to- so when I met the teacher in the cafeteria I would turn my back on him or her and just walk away – I didn’t want to talk -don’t know that might be- part of my character. (Thai4f)

Although she has studied in the US and Australia and, indeed, was a willing participant in this research, Thai4f has defined herself as not conforming to the stereotype of the successful learner; she is able to express her individuality and has the confidence to choose when she might want to interact in English.

Memories evoked by participants have revealed a range of factors impacting on their early learning. The strongest seem to derive from the affective domain, relating to a positive enjoyment of learning English. This admitted enjoyment seems to have pushed participants in a number of directions to develop their skills or to continue to use what they already possessed. On the one hand, pleasure in reading was sufficient to motivate individuals to pursue this activity, while on the other, enthusiasm for learning English led them to adopt various strategies to improve their skills.

5.3. Local Influences

The three main local influences emerging most strongly in discussions are those of family, other languages and education systems. Thus in this section the emphasis shifts from the individual’s attitudes to major features of the surrounding context. The influence of family extends into participants’ cultural contexts but I have included it in the discussion of local influences because participants themselves did not equate ‘family’ with ‘culture’ in their recollections, possibly because parental involvement is seen as a very intimate part of their learning experiences, while culture is seen as a stand-alone topic, more distant because it requires reflection and definition to interpret.

5.3.1 Family

In some cases, parental involvement was recalled as an influence in inspiring interest:

And I remember my dad, he was very supportive - he used to buy every lesson and the video – cassette that can help us, um, learn English... Actually, my very first informal lesson was provided by my dad, er, he wrote the 26 letters of the alphabet on paper and he gave me the words and the sounds and I could imitate the words and the sounds before I started my formal lessons. (Thai3f)

It seems she valued her father's teaching more than her school's: 'And in early lessons we worked hard to memorize the vocabularies and handwriting but not much meaning or real use.' (Thai3f)

Similarly, Phil1f's mother started teaching her children English when they were very young so that they were ahead when they began formal instruction.

OK in my case I started formal English lessons at the age of 6 when I was in first grade, but before that Anne – this is not a usual case – because my parents wanted us to start learning English a bit earlier – my mum because she's a teacher – she actually started teaching us the alphabet when we were 3- 4 years old. So when I started first grade, I had a little bit of English at home already. (Phil1f)

She attributes her fondness for English to mother's encouragement:

... I think it's because my mum exposed us to books early on – English books, nursery rhymes so I really enjoyed learning English. (Phil1f)

Indi1f remembers her family expressing great pride in her English achievement:

Yeah and my family – and that, they'd say – she's great, she speaks great and then if somebody would give you a gift it'd be like a collection of poems (Indi1f)

However, this pride was expressed in front of others and did not include encouraging use of English as a living language:

Yeah, but they didn't talk to me in English ... (Indi1f)

There was also the memory of local parents, in this case in China, wanting students to tutor their children - further evidence of the cultural capital of English (Bourdieu, 1991):

And um I remembered that so many of them, parents during their primary school, ask or invite some students to go to their home tutor and give them some experience teaching or something else to guide their students or their children to go to the college, yes, very important. (Chin3f)

And in Indonesia, inspiration goes back to an early memory of this participant's father on the bus:

Yes, because first of all I was interested in learning English um, before I registered myself into English education – ok, just like my father talking with foreigners in the bus!(Indo1f)

The memory of her father speaking English with foreigners remained a happy one:

A little bit but - but I was really happy when I saw my father at that time talking with foreigners. (Oh yeah) In the bus! (laugh) I thought that English is, oh yeah, very interesting and talking with a foreigner, you know, wow, so I just registered myself in this (English) department. (Indo1f)

Indo1f was less enthusiastic about her formal English learning:

I started in my, well, formally it was in junior high school – first year – it was – I didn't think that I got a lot there – it's you know, grammar things, yeah, and senior high school I only got one year for English because I was taking the school ... but not for English - I started again and continued at university OK, (Mm) so basically I felt that I started to learn English in university. (Indo1f)

For this participant, it seems that despite unimpressive early learning, she still progressed at a later stage, having found her father's example perhaps more valuable. Indeed the universally acknowledged value of parental support in education, whether manifested through active teaching or expression of pride in children's achievement is shown to be as important for these English learners as for all other young students.

5.3.2 Other languages

The portrayal of the local context involves a consideration of the role of English alongside other languages in the community. Learning other languages seems to have been taken for granted in Singapore:

In the Singapore context surprisingly, it didn't bother us as much because we were all at least a 2nd language learner. Given that everyone spoke a 2nd language. (Sing1f)

In some contexts acquiring English alongside other languages was the norm, especially in postcolonial Singapore, and as Indi1f recalls from growing up in southern India:

We had it [English] in grade 1, yeah but in our house we never spoke English. With our friends we had to because they came from different language backgrounds. (Indi1f)

Indi1f recalls both social and educational uses for English:

If you picked it up that was good and then you would be, I don't know, popular with the teachers. (Indi1f)

There seems to have been a certain social pressure for her to learn English as a lingua franca in order to communicate with her friends, as well as being well thought of by her teachers. In her case Arabic also featured briefly, together with a 'mix' of languages in her schooldays:

... we had a mix really. We learnt Hindi and we learnt Malayalam and we learnt – I learnt a bit of Arabic as well (right) and I learnt English as well so it depends on what they want to do - yeah, but I didn't learn Arabic well at all – hardly ever used it - only in class. (Indi1f)

Arabic featured in her education because her family spent some time in the Middle East:

.Ah we were in the Middle East for a while – it was a must and I really liked the language but I never got a chance to use it. (Indi1f)

There is thus a world of language learning outside English which depends on the trajectories of individuals' lives. English is not always the only language required; in the Middle East Arabic was considered 'a must' for Indi1f. Sing1f, having described herself as a second language learner at the beginning of this section, remembers learning three languages in her childhood as being quite normal:

I consider it [English] as my second language. I was born speaking Tamil, as my mother language and when I went to school everyone spoke in English so you just pick it up. You learn two languages at the same time, simultaneously and by the age of 10 I had to pick up a 3rd language because the natural language of the country is Bahasa [Malay] so I was learning three languages without even thinking about that. (Sing1f)

English, then, did not occupy first place in participants' lives and did not manage to cover all communication needs but can be seen as part of a plurilingual tradition (Canagarajah 2009, discussed in Chapter 2) according to which it has its own purpose and place.

5.3.4 Education systems

The teaching of English around the world is managed according to diverse education systems which are acknowledged by participants to the extent that they are perceived to have impacted on their learning. Aspects mentioned range from the nature of the learning environment to government policies.

One example below portrays a Chinese university learning environment as being stressful because of the policy of teaching in English:

When I got to college I was shocked in the atmosphere – it's not very, it's very anxious, and everyone around us are all hardworking and the teacher came to us in the college and often teach everything in English, so I cannot follow the maths, for example the maths they often use English to teach the maths in class and the politics and everything else they often use English to teach us. I have a long way to adjust to the teacher's class. (Chin3f)

Being obliged to learn other difficult subjects in English rather than her first language seems to have been a stressful process for Chin3f and her fellow students.

Often the first reason for English was to pass exams a way of gaining points to enter university: '... English was compulsory for secondary school from year 10 and when I was at secondary school I learnt it NOT to communicate: I learnt it to pass exam' (Viet1m). From this participant we learn that the need for English was related, in the first instance, to passing exams so that English was seen as a school subject rather than as a means of communication.

Many comments reveal how local policies in fact shaped the learner's attitudes about English; in this case, the opportunity to shine was encouraged:

I think I started my English learning at the end of my primary school education, just because of - in my environment every student has to cope with competition and to be outstanding and we took pride in our, our outstandingness and I remember very well, I think it was the summer after the entrance examination for secondary school and when one of the teachers of our primary school said once you enter the secondary school, middle school, you have to have English lessons and I would like to start a beginners course so you will cope with that new subject easily and immediately I registered and I take away up to 30 hours of teaching in this class (Mm 30 hours) and I guess because of this it gave me a good start; because I was really starting the new semester in the middle school I felt quite relieved because I already knew quite a lot. (Chin1f)

A similar offer to learn more English, in the form of a pilot program was taken up by Viet1m:

... because I came from a rural area and when I studied English, I started learning English in year 5 or 6 or something like – I didn't remember but at that time it was some kind of a pilot program and the program just ran for about several months and it was removed from the curriculum but English was compulsory for secondary school from year 10. (Viet1m)

This opportunity seems to have been short-lived and shows students to have been at the mercy of changing policies in different parts of their countries. Sometimes these policies were serendipitous for learners, as in the example of Vietnam opening its doors to world trade, evidence of the significant role of historical events in global English learning.

Um, you know that I finished my secondary school in 1988 – and in 1986 when Vietnam implemented its open-door policy -before Vietnam was closed to the world -(yeah) but since 1986 but just one year after I entered the secondary school, the first – it was a compulsory subject. (Viet1m)

From then on, of course, the role of English in Vietnam accelerated, enabling Viet1m to find a range of encouraging opportunities:

And I was elected to – because we had some kind of gift for examination for students in certain subjects (yes) and two different levels at that time to the provincial level and the national level and I was chosen for the provincial level in year 11 so by the – nearly the end of year 12, I decided to take English as one of the er, subjects...into the university. (Viet1m)

The competitive spirit described by Chin1f, is also evident in this mention by Viet1m of a 'gift' for students who excelled. Likewise, Sing2m won a 'book prize' (as mentioned earlier.) when he finished primary school - further indication of how various education policies included rewards as part of the encouragement to continue studies.

These impressions of local policies and attitudes identify the language learning process as an integral part of many educational systems. At the same time, they enhance understanding of how English fits into a world where it is not the first language, showing the language as a separate subject which belonged to a defined educational curriculum, and therefore still had to be allocated a role as a communicative tool. English, then, is seen as a skill to be mastered and put to good use and its significance increases as users decide to make it part of their career.

5.4. Reflections on language learning and identity

Individuals have needed to reflect on the role of English in their lives because they have needed to make decisions about study options and career paths. Finding that they are good at English, or deciding that they like it has, in some of the examples above, particularly from China or Vietnam, coincided with their countries' encouragement of English language, for perceived economic advantage in the global marketplace. An example of the kind of reflection that becomes possible through studying a language in depth comes from Thai5f:

Actually I do like linguistics (do you) because I chose a combination of linguistics and ... because I would like to say that I did bachelor degree but not English – in Thai (oh did you?) and I do like linguistics more than literature which is amazing because when you read something and then you interpret the literature or the poems from something and then you make the interpretation and then you make the argument I felt too strongly that the teacher doesn't really have, that I can't – position myself with the teacher's idea – that is the literature idea of the teacher. So I feel happy with rules and structure of language maybe because I am the one who likes something strict. And structure (Yes, something concrete). (Thai5f)

Interestingly, Thai5f has analysed her preference for linguistics over literature in terms of learning style. She seems to feel that literary interpretation is too amorphous, perhaps too individual and personal, to be reliable for disciplined study and rather than depend on the teacher's interpretation of a text, she chooses the safety net of rules and structure, in this way

defining an aspect of her own identity. She goes on ‘the linguistics right – you have the study of language and structure – you know the noun forms, the structure of Chomsky’ indicating confidence with teaching language: ‘but actually being an English teacher when I did the masters I felt like someone- or some qualified teacher who is assistant professor in my country – I know it deeply.’ (Thai5f) What seems important here is the way in which the study of language has contributed to the development of a confident professional identity.

Local context also influences identity. One important feature noticeable in the data is coming from a ‘rural area’ which is considered to have implications for language study because it can be inferred that students from urban areas were seen as more confident, having had greater exposure to English.

I didn’t like the 4 years there because I was from rural country - rural area too, and we were not familiar with using the – in classroom – in bachelor degree program, using English – you have to use English 70%, 90% and most of the tutors were American - yes I spent most of my time sitting at the back and avoiding eye contact with them (Thai4f)

Identity as an English speaker thus sits uncomfortably alongside local identity and some students in fact wished to retain their ‘rural’ identity because of close family ties:

But it’s very hard to live in Bangkok for the country girls like us. I was very attached to my parents – I did not want to leave them so I decided to do a masters degree so I could go back to visit them every week, but Bangkok was very far. (Thai3f)

Having described herself as a ‘country girl’, Thai3f found it difficult to change this part of her identity to adjust to life in Bangkok. Thai4f had similar issues as a ‘country girl’ trying to adjust to life in the capital:

And my - after I finished university I took a job in Bangkok and I got the bank teller job in Bangkok and I was very worried about travelling to work because I need to take the boat and I don’t know how to do it and take the bus and I need to live quite far away from the place that I work and then I dropped that job and I applied for a job as teacher in xx university and I got that position. (Thai4f)

For her, the job of bank teller was not worth the day-to-day struggles with transport in a large city and she moved to a position in a rural university. Teaching was not her first choice but lifestyle choices drew her in that direction.

Thus the local context in which English is learnt throws light on the identities of those learning it. Contributing to this identity are a number of features: as learners, participants express likes and dislikes about the learning process; they also remember tactics they adopted and the attitudes of family members who helped them. In some instances, the language was an integral part of other interests, whereas in others it was a necessary step in the formal educational curriculum. In addition, exposure to the local learning environment from an early age has given participants a degree of control over their language learning which will contribute to a high level of ownership of their profession.

5.5. Cultural influences

Some people may think that China is a big country with the most population in the world, that globalisation would never ruin Chinese culture and Chinese language: that is wrong. (Chin4m)

Chin4m has here voiced a concern about the dangers of cultural imperialism which echoes the discussion in Chapter Two of the literature on the topic. The data recognises that culture may have both positive and negative influences on learning. A number of factors highlighted by participants as influencing their language learning take shelter under the broad ‘cultural’ umbrella. Culture, always difficult to define and often used inappropriately due its currently fashionable status, has many features which render it an important concept in language learning and teaching. It becomes prominent when, for example, individuals find themselves at a ‘cultural interface’, which may be interpreted as a kind of junction where one culture comes up against another and both are seen in a new light by those finding themselves at the interface.

The use of the word ‘foreign’ elicited a range of observations about how participants observed cultural difference and first discovered ways of behaving and teaching that appeared at variance with those they had learnt. The two following subsections, therefore, are entitled ‘Foreign teachers’ and ‘Foreign customs’ with the aim of elucidating how cultural awareness impacts on linguistic knowledge. These are followed by ‘Foreign literature’, which describes some of the effects of literature on both cognitive processes and levels of interest. Teachers describe cultural

differences they perceive between their own literature and what they have read in English, and also the enthusiasm for English generated by reading.

5.5.1. Foreign teachers

Foreign teachers imparted a distinctly different flavour to the language classroom. Their influence is in fact more pervasive than is documented in much of the literature on the role of culture, which focuses on explicit teaching of cultural information perhaps more than on the cultural role of teachers as individuals. For many learners, the foreign teacher is the first point of contact with the language and hence the embodiment of its cultural values:

Well, the teachers who taught English were Anglo-Indians so they were completely different -they were a mixture of Dutch, Portuguese – you would almost think they were people from here (Australia)– and they had a different attitude –they were not really, ah – they were not tough - they were not tough in class so I really liked the subject as well. (Indi1f)

Of importance here is the way this participant has linked language and context. In her terms, the context of her English class involved the attitudes of her teachers (including Dutch and Portuguese) and for this reason she preferred English. A different culture implies a different view of teacher/student relationships, evident in the description of the teachers not being ‘tough’. Teachers’ behaviours, then, are seen to be derived from a different culture than that to which participants are accustomed.

Not only behaviour but also appearances are remembered, alongside an indication of English being seen as the gateway to a more exciting life:

I n English, I thought that my teacher was beautiful and she dressed very well and I tried to pronounce the words. (Thai4f)

....Yeah and to me, I thought that the teacher who taught English was modern, very up-to-date, speaking a language that we don’t understand, cool, and we could say words that our parents don’t understand. (Thai3f)

These of course, are early memories and records of less mature attitudes to teachers but they represent visual impressions surrounding the pedagogic and as such complete the cultural picture.

On a pedagogic level, before becoming a bilingual teacher herself, Indo1f remembers the advantages of being taught by one. Her comments support published research on bilingual teaching, which affirms the importance of using the first language in the classroom, rather than insisting on only English. For her, these early experiences provided role models for appropriate management of bilingual learning:

... there was one foreign teacher – she also spoke Bahasa Indonesia so – she spoke English when she was teaching – what made me, you know, help – helpful was that if I don't know I switch into Bahasa Indonesia and she understood that. (Indo1f)

The memory of a helpful, bilingual teacher seems to have made an impact here:

This is very helpful, actually, this is very good. We can get some – I mean the teachers can share their experience in learning other languages. (Indo1f)

This Indonesian participant describes a 'native speaker' teacher as a kind of reverse image of the 'non-native' speaker because she remembers a teacher who spoke her language and used it when needed in the classroom. It is an important memory to reflect on because it contradicts the image of the monolingual native speaker, thus resisting the stereotyping imposed by dichotomies.

The concept of culture is also made prominent when individuals find themselves at a 'cultural interface', which may be interpreted as a kind of junction where one culture comes up against another and both are seen in a new light by those finding themselves at the 'interface', important because whenever a new language is introduced into the classroom, students and teachers alike are aware of the attendant cultural differences, especially when the teacher comes from a different background. For example, when learning another language, students may assume that features of that language's culture are embodied by the teacher of that language, and, if their reaction to these beliefs, values and concepts is positive, they may seek to adopt them.

Thus teachers from non-local backgrounds contributed significantly to the cultural context of language learning in a variety of ways which are positively remembered. Participants have considered the changes wrought in the classroom context: possibilities, mediated by the teacher, of escaping from the tedium of everyday classroom activities. There was also pedagogic

appreciation of a bilingual teacher, providing further evidence of how early language learning can influence teaching (cf. Borg, 2003 and further discussion in Chapter 8)

5.5.2 Foreign customs

Part of the overall cultural impact of learning a foreign language involves becoming acquainted with different traditions. Observations by two participants below establish a distinction between cultural events taught in class as part of the language learning experience, and cultural practices outside the classroom which could be seen as a threat to national identity.

... we thought it was cool to use English outside the class and we did a lot of activities and we did things like Hallowe'en day or birthday party and we invited foreign teachers to our party. I think that really we wanted to speak English but not totally in classroom. (Thai3f)

In an environment where English was not widely spoken, using a cultural event is usually considered to be an encouragement to practise the language. The use of festivals in this example was contained within the language learning environment and was therefore acceptable.

There are, however, limits to how far other cultural traditions, when strongly visible, should be tolerated and this example from China indicates overstepping the mark, unlike the Thai example, where cultural events were a harmless part of the curriculum:

Erm, some people do realise the threat of English to Chinese culture... Many, many Chinese people did not know Christmas. Now the situation is different even a few years ago it seems this was the trend that people, that Christmas seems to be more important than Chinese traditional festivals and so the Chinese government took some measures to emphasise, to let the young people know more about Chinese history and the specific measures, for example, once you come to an important traditional Chinese festival, there will be holiday, one day or two day holiday, so that young people will have an impression 'oh this is Chinese culture – we have a holiday now!' and er, now when traditional Chinese spring festival is around the corner and the businessmen also decorate their department stores, their business their companies with Chinese culture or decorate in Chinese way but before that it just seemed during Christmas, this is more influential, this was more influential during traditional Chinese festival not much actually but now it seems there is a change, yeah but I think culture, for culture, erm, different culture should be integrated into each other but this is a good thing on the one hand people could learn from each other. (Chin4m)

This anecdote is strong evidence of the well documented global presence of English. Christmas is a very obvious form of cultural colonization but the Chinese government, according to this participant, have dealt with it extremely efficiently on a national level.

The view presented above by Chin4m affirms the value of learning about other cultures but indicates wariness of adopting them to the extent that they replace already existing, perhaps taken for granted, traditions deriving from a long local history.

These examples show, on the one hand, a common approach to incorporating culture into language lessons, seen here from the students' point of view, and on the other hand, a concern for the dangers of cultural imperialism. Thus negative and positive sides of globalization are illustrated: negatively, cultural identity can disappear if it is not nurtured while positively, allocating a place for the study of other cultures will promote global understanding. The example about Christmas in China does not make explicit a link between language study and culture but it illustrates the threat felt by one culture as it observes invasion by another. Similar fears about cultural dominance have been noted by, among others, Canagarajah, who refers to the 'complex ideological and social choices' that individuals make in adopting English (1999: 57), but with reference to postcolonial societies. In the case of mainland China, linguistic and cultural domination constitute as much of a threat as they do in postcolonial societies. The difference, however, lies in the historical fact of colonisation; whereas countries in the postcolonial era have learnt to deal with outsider dominance from their experiences of breaking free of it, uncolonised countries are just beginning to see the possible dangers of cultural and linguistic imperialism, and having to decide how far they want to admit foreign influences.

5.5.3 Foreign literature

Literature, of course, is seen as a repository of culture in terms of the artistic expression of what a society feels and believes. As I have shown elsewhere (Chapters 2, 3 and 7) literary works can both reflect and support major features of the society in which they are composed. However, when this society has little connection with the one in which the teaching takes place, it is usually necessary for the teacher to build a bridge to the text to be studied particularly when it has travelled far from its cultural and temporal origins. Indilf shows her awareness of this:

The thing is Anne you have all these teachers being trained who just teach English like maths or like science, it is not identified with a culture so who's Somerset Maugham? A writer ... I never knew what his times were ... I remember he drank champagne because the lesson – the lunch where this lady comes to meet him and she asks for the salmon and champagne and asparagus so they (the students) come in here and ask what is this asparagus and this champagne – it has certain connotations. (Indi1f)

It is indeed difficult to imagine how Somerset Maugham's tale involving asparagus, salmon and champagne, well endowed with literary merit though it is, could have relevance for a southern Indian classroom in the next century, without very careful teaching. From Indi1f's memory of the incident, it would appear that the teacher missed a very good opportunity to extend the students' experience beyond what they were familiar with and introduce them to a world where salmon, champagne and asparagus symbolized a certain way of life. Indi1f describes this incident with a certain degree of frustration at the ineptitude of some of her teachers, in spite of which she developed a fondness for literature:

... but then I started to read English literature as well. I took it in my masters ... And that's when I really liked English (Indi1f)

This participant's memories of her literary studies recall what she considered to be inadequate teaching but at the same time they portray a fondness for literature. After stating her favourite period of English literature to be 'probably from Chaucer' she describes how she began shaping an identity for herself by joining an 'elite' group:

I developed a sort of liking towards the literature and then I became – I identified myself as one of the elite you might say. (Indi1f)

Her choice of literature as a specialisation seems to have exposed her to a range of literatures:

Just, we didn't specialise in anything so they just give bits of English, bits of European, bits of Indian and bits of American (Indi1f)

Alongside her memories of studying literature, Indi1f recalls how it was taught and now feels critical of the methodology, which seemed to involve commenting on short extracts:

We had to write a 3 hour exam at the end of every year and annotations – short answer questions – all this but nobody actually asked you, where'd you get the materials from – is it your ideas is it somebody else's ideas -so I thought I'm doing great you know, if I take from Knight, I think there's a book by Knight... Yes, Wilson Knight I remember that. I never thought that you know I'm supposed to add my ideas (Indi1f)

I will return to Indi1f in the next section on the advantages of studying abroad where she contrasts her masters studies in Australia with the two masters she obtained in India, and which she appears to have strongly marginalised. In addition to her previous comments, she declares herself embarrassed because she never learnt to add her own thoughts to those of critics during her master's studies.

English literature was also important for Phil1f, who states a fondness for reading in English as a prime motivation for continuing to study it:

I loved reading in English – literature in English so two things I failed to mention – I think one of the ways that I learnt English is more on self-study – I mean I learnt all that stuff in school more formal studies – but and this is a personal belief – that I think I learnt more about the language because I read in English. (Phil1f)

In Phil1f's experience, the classroom was only the starting point for her involvement with English as she attributes her success to reading outside the classroom, expressing a similar enjoyment to that of participants in 5.2.2, above. Likewise, Chin1f enjoyed studying literature and found that she also benefited from a different teaching style:

I think I, well, I did a whole year of British and American literature. I think the two courses were very comprehensive and we met a nice teacher. She's very gentle. And she encouraged a lot of personal understanding of the literature work among the young in the classrooms so we were encouraged to speak out a lot, so we say "I think". (Chin1f)

Her study of literature enabled her to refer to differences between Chinese and English literature especially concerning romance:

Definitely, because I think we Chinese have a very different way of understanding romance. We are very much influenced by our Chinese poetry and Chinese literature... Well Chinese literature and Chinese poetry, as you say, because of the long history that we have, well, I don't know, but I do regard, as ... myself, I teach my students to love Chinese. (Chin1f)

Two important contrasts are noted in these extracts, firstly, regarding the teaching methodology of the foreign ('Native Speaker') teacher and secondly, regarding differences in the literature of the two languages. The overlap between literature and culture is made explicit as Chin1f points to a difference between Chinese and English approaches to romance, at the same time acknowledging the influence of Chinese literature on her own heritage. Furthermore, her words imply a fondness for Chinese literature which she asserts that she passes on to her students. The positive memories of the English literature teaching methodology seem to derive not only from the teacher being a foreigner but also from the novel experience of being encouraged to voice an opinion and 'speak out a lot'. This memory is in contrast to that of Ind1f, above, who regretted not being given such an opportunity in her literature classes.

Another impression of contrasting literary traditions was volunteered by Chin3f. Describing how she saw English literature, she remarked, 'I felt that something from the literature was eternal words, from the human beings.' She went on to try to distinguish the two approaches:

It's different, so different. Chinese literature may be – we often talk about something very big, very big on the outside of the world and in English literature they often tell something in details from someone's feelings. ... Mmm, it [Chinese literature] often describes something from the outside of the human feelings – you can touch – you can feel from the atmosphere. In the literature. But in English literature you can feel something from the details and then you can go out, outside of the human beings. (Chin3f)

It would require a deep knowledge of both literatures to unravel what Chin3f is trying to explain here but I have included her comments because they show the effort she was able to make to recognise the differences inherent in two literary traditions. Further investigation may discover similarities between what Chin1f saw as the different treatment of romance and Chin3f's impression about the portrayal of human feelings; she seemed to imply that English literature dwells on exploring the individual's feelings, perhaps as a result of the Romantic movement in

the 18th-19th centuries in Europe, while Chinese literature prefers to create an atmosphere exterior to the individual. This topic belongs in the realm of comparative literature and lies outside of the current study but it demonstrates how ideas may be evoked and shaped by reference to traditions outside of one's own.

Culturally, learning English in one's own country seems to allow individuals the chance to connect with aspects of the foreign culture in the sheltered contact zone of the classroom. Understanding culture also involves understanding context which, in the classroom, includes perceptions by participants of teachers, customs and literature in their English classes.

Being encouraged to say 'I think ...' as Chin1f described, opened up the possibility of different approaches to learning which, since they took place in another language, would not feel a threat to prior learning but would clarify learning expectations in the new language particularly regarding the expression of one's own ideas as part of the learning process. Love of literature was an important motivational force for several participants, primarily, it would seem, deriving from a simple love of reading but also for the insight it offers into a new culture, at the same time as highlighting aspects of one's own. In summary, learning English seemed to offer participants the opportunity to explore new ways of dealing with universal concerns in life whether to do with food, manners, or learning approaches, often with the effect of reviewing and at times strengthening, their own cultural practices.

5.6. Advantages and disadvantages of studying in English-speaking countries

All of the participants are currently- or have been recently - studying in English-speaking countries but it was not felt ethical to probe them on the negative aspects of their current experiences as this could, among other reasons, prompt feelings of insecurity about their current courses/programs. In addition to their current studies, however, many participants were able to draw on previous study abroad experiences. Advantages recalled ranged from improving language skills to learning about different cultures – both the culture of learning and the culture of the western country.

5.6.1 Advantages

As they reflect on previous experiences, participants are able to state the principal gains from their overseas studies. Sing2m valued the shift from local to global interaction, with an accompanying intellectual shift, expressed as ‘sharpen[ing] your critical tools’. His comparison of teaching styles is also perceptive when he recalls his time in Michigan:

I think the most important thing was that you were able to interact with people from different cultures and perhaps you know, yeah, sharpen your critical tools and yeah, I think meeting people from different backgrounds was very important. That was the main, I think, advantage that I gained. (Sing2m)

He went on to note the following differences between the US and Singapore:

I would say that, er the students speak up so much more in the states and their views are heard whereas Singapore students tend to be on the quiet side and er in terms of assessment I would say that pretty much the professor controls what kind of assessment is relevant for the course and what the level should be whereas even at university level in Singapore (it is) the university... rather than the individual professor. (Sing2m)

Highlighted here are the differences rather than the advantages, showing a careful evaluation which does not assign preferences to either study experience. Sing2m seems to have appreciated the chance to engage with students from other cultures and to be part of a different learning environment. Most memorable, apparently, was learning and teaching autonomy: students were encouraged to share their views and teachers were able to control the way their courses were taught and assessed, in contrast to what he had been accustomed to previously.

There is a brief reminder below of the earlier discussion of text and context in Chin4m ’s allusion to language being ‘deeply rooted’ in culture. He believes that an understanding of the context of English, that is, the countries where it is spoken, will have a favourable impact on the English knowledge of Chinese teachers:

If we say language is deeply rooted in culture I think it is absolutely necessary for teachers of English in China to come to English speaking countries. I think this is the best way for them to improve their English. Unfortunately only a very, very small amount of Chinese teachers of English have the opportunity to live, work in

English speaking countries. This is one comment the policy makers have to pay attention to.
(Chin4m)

The advantages are to do with context and culture influencing linguistic skills. Chin4m is emphatic that the main benefit for Chinese teachers coming overseas is to be immersed in English so that, he believes, linguistic competence would be improved to a degree which is impossible in China:

In my opinion, for teachers of English, linguistic competence, language proficiency, is very, very important. In China, because of the culture, so if you do PhD in China and you do PhD here, the result would be quite different because the linguistic environment (yes, yes) for the consideration of improving my linguistic competence in English, I think this would be much better... Yeah, and it is a fact that in China some of the scholars, they have done very well in their research but their English is still limited. (Chin4m)

Throughout his testimony, Chin4m has expressed concern at the lack of exposure to English among China's English teachers and feels that they would profit from spending time in an English speaking country - from the environment rather than from any course of study they might undertake.

Another major benefit is increased confidence. Thai3f stated that it took her six months to be able to ask for clarification in class and saw this event as a landmark in developing the confidence to interact with teachers and fellow students:

After about 6 months I felt I deal with it, I can't avoid it. I developed my confidence enough to raise my hand and say 'sorry, I couldn't follow you, I got lost and could you repeat that again - very natural and for my supervisor as well. (Thai3f)

Thai4f, too, needed time to adjust to study overseas and was reassured to find that Australian students could have similar difficulties:

Once I saw that the people sitting in the class were not that smart (because I expected that they must be very smart) I saw that they had questions too and I started to feel more confident and from that moment on ... once they ask questions I think Ok they need some more knowledge but because they're Australian so why should I be scared of asking questions. (Thai4f)

This participant has broken through the stereotype barrier: she realizes that it is not just foreign students who have problems with course demands; sometimes Australian students are equally at a loss. Kumaravadivelu (2003) has made the same point in his observations of American students, that is, that there is sometimes little difference between their learning problems and those of the overseas students.

Success in a different learning culture was seen as a great boost to confidence:

We think that we have learned from here and we think that we are confident to tell everyone that we – let our actions prove our quality ... you have to maintain the confidence ... I just enjoy my confidence! I never had it before! (Thai3f)

Other considerations are practical, such as exposure to libraries and materials. Phil1f makes clear that her university in Mindanao is not able to afford journal subscriptions in the way taken for granted by well-resourced 'Western' institutions.

You see, er, you see Anne, it's a really good university in Mindanao especially it's one of the best universities but in terms of research we're really, really behind compared to places like Manila and Cebu – to tell you honestly when it comes to current studies in TESOL we don't have access to journals – that is true we don't have access to TESOLQ or things like that. ... or online... Well, you have to, you have to pay for that, right? (yes) our library – we don't have that... And so that's really a challenge. So I feel there are a lot of things I'll be able to bring there – and not just you know, teach what I've learned here or show what I've learned here. But also to see how English teachers can be more updated – and that's very important you know I felt when I came here I was so behind. (Phil1f)

She confesses to feeling very 'behind' when she first arrived, perhaps due to the lack of resources but possibly also due to self-marginalization. Generally, though, it seems that the overseas experience has been valuable because of the exposure to a range of resources which may inspire new ways of dealing with existing problems.

5.6.1 Disadvantages

Participants did not record any insurmountable disadvantages although sometimes, the study abroad experience was not totally positive and needed considerable adjustment. Some

participants also recorded feelings of discomfort and confusion when studying in an alien environment, after having been among the top students in their home universities.

Thai4f's first experience overseas was in the USA and while there she worried about her inability to speak:

I feel I didn't get enough, enough information in the classroom because the language, ... but I read a lot, I read a lot and I passed because of my studying and my reading (yeah) I read a lot, I did not have much participation in the classroom and I didn't speak a lot and it was - very torment, it was torment. (Thai4f)

This experience was in sharp contrast to what she recalled about study at home:

No -quite confident. I was in the best group of the class (the top 10) the top 5 of the classroom. (Thai4f)

By the time she came to Australia to study for her doctorate, Thai4f was able to overcome these difficulties, as described in 5.2, above but her memories show that the process was a struggle. From being among the top five in her class in Thailand she found herself at a much lower level in the USA and although she succeeded in obtaining the required grades, she did not seem to have happy memories of the time.

Academic expectations in another culture can be troublesome for students who are new to them and the situation can be exacerbated by distance learning, as described by Indi1f, referred to above in the discussion of foreign literature. She was studying for her masters at another Australian university and expressed some confusion:

I'm really enjoying it. I just – I was remarking to my husband today – if I'd done this degree five years ago when I'd done my masters I would have finished a PhD by now. I feel at a loss and I see all this university environment – I have to do the whole thing again because I don't have the skills to be good at debate and that's what people need here. (Indi1f)

Having expressed her enjoyment, Indi1f goes on to say what she finds particularly difficult about Australian academic expectations, feeling that the masters degrees she completed in India provided no preparation for current study. She now feels inadequate in approaching applied linguistics at a postgraduate level despite her range of experience teaching in India and Australia.

In addition, she finds that studying by distance poses some challenges:

... because I'm not in the classroom – I'm doing it by myself so it's very hard. ... It's hard to do it at a distance. I have no idea what the lecturer actually wants. I'm trying to talk with them I think I probably overapologise to them regarding the quality of my assignments. (Indi1f)

Indi1f has admitted to a level of 'self-marginalisation' (Kumaravadivelu, 2006 and discussed in Chapter 3) implied here by 'overapologise' but she is persisting in trying to establish an understanding of her course requirements.

Indi1f has described her encounter with these practices as she tries to come to grips with them, perhaps without suitable encouragement, illustrating the complexity surrounding expectations of student performance and the way in which academic cultures enforce rigid standards. Important for the current study is what is revealed by the reflections of the participant as she moves from learning English to learning to teach English in India, to learning about English teaching in Australia. Further steps in her journey will be examined in subsequent chapters in this study.

Studying abroad is for most participants an attractive option with practical, exterior factors generally contributing more than internal, affective factors. Hence availability of materials and exposure to English are uncontested advantages but confidence and motivation may be diminished if the student is not comfortable in the new environment. Forging intercultural connections and having the chance to simply speak and listen to English are also valued. Sometimes the changed conditions of an English-speaking environment or unexpected academic requirements, create initial difficulties but as familiarity with the new context grows, there is a commensurate increase in confidence and the gains eventually outweigh and replace the losses.

5.7. Conclusion

These reminiscences establish a basis for understanding the insights of multilingual teachers into language learning by illustrating how answers to the question 'What are your earliest memories of learning English?' prompt the recall of a range of influences, from family support to historical events, which can be shown to have impact on the development of linguistic skills.

In their own words, participants have recalled what was important for them about their early language learning, in the process exhibiting an awareness of all the documented aspects of language learning, acquired from their own firsthand experience, and thus possessing a dimension of reliability and validity which is difficult to contest. Early memories were willingly shared and illustrated how the language was incorporated into the individuals' lives in such a way that, when necessary, incidents could be retrieved for analysis and applied to ongoing learning. Affective factors have emerged as strong influences leading participants down paths that would result in major career choices. Likewise, their understanding of local contexts has ensured that participants are pre-eminently qualified, in accordance with current professional beliefs, to appreciate local issues. Not only local knowledge, it is contended, but also exposure to other contexts is enriching in that, as participants have shown, it enables pertinent cultural comparisons to be made. In turn, cultural influences have also played an important role, enriching the appreciation of diversity.

This chapter, then, has provided evidence of a rich variety of learning influences, from the classroom environment to the world beyond, peopled with family members, friends and foreigners who have all made some contribution to language learning. In terms of shedding light on the research questions, the information has shown how memories of language learning provide a foundation for the development of professional skills, strengthening the position of multilingual teachers to take ownership of their profession through their own past experience. Furthermore, the use of other languages has enabled them to develop a clear perception of the place of English, and hence the needs of students, in their contexts while cultural knowledge, acquired at home and abroad, deepens understanding of social, political and historical factors shaping attitudes to English use.

Thus the purpose of asking participants about their learning experiences has been to highlight the beginning of the journey to become an English teacher and in doing so, to draw out from these experiences aspects of linguistic, cognitive, cultural and contextual knowledge that are recognised widely as being important for language teachers, but nevertheless are not widely acknowledged as being an integral part of some teachers' backgrounds.

The impact of this body of enriched knowledge will be further explored in the ensuing chapters, in the continuing exposure of the native/non-native speaker fallacy, at the same time developing the connection between learning English and teaching it. Before looking at what participants have said about teaching English, however, it is essential to consider how they use it and hence set the stage for an understanding of the dominant influences on the professional lives of multilingual English teachers.

CHAPTER 6 USING ENGLISH

6.1. Introduction

Ideas about the worldliness of English, its use and ownership are readily expressed in opinions and comments from participants as they show themselves to be stakeholders in the future of the language. They provide evidence of increasingly powerful claims about the ownership of English which are being made in forums around the world. Comments range from acceptance of English as a worldwide lingua franca to reports of exhortations to take control of the language.

Its established role is confirmed by comments such as these:

Well, English is the lingua franca. It's the language of commerce, the language of literature ... I think English is going to be the language everyone wants to have a piece of. (Sing1f)

Chin4m endorses this view and notes the consequence that ownership of English seems to have shifted:

My opinion in this issue is the globalisation of English is a trend. Nobody could stop it. While we talk about world Englishes, we actually imply that English has already become an international language reaching people from different cultures. We also imply that English is also out of control of English speaking countries (laugh). (Chin4m)

Sing1f takes the notion of ownership of English further. Not only, it appears, is the 'trend' unstoppable, but the progress of English is to be actively encouraged:

And that's the way it is now... I don't remember the name but this African writer, he said 'take the language and make it your own'. (Sing1f)

In a similar vein, she reports on a recent conference she attended:

What came to mind is when I was in Cambodia I sat in for a session on grammar – how to teach grammar, communicative grammar and the presenter was an Indian person Dr. ... from Kerala. It was amazing how he, he just gave us a text and he, an Indian text and he looked at all the grammar items in that one text and he said 'this is how you teach grammar and he said one thing: don't care about the Englishman, Don't let him dictate how English should be written. You own the language now, you write it the way it should be written. (Sing1f)

The point to make here is that multilingual users of the language are claiming a level of knowledge equal to that of ‘native speakers’ and that they are able to articulate justification for their claim.

This chapter contributes to answering the research questions, in particular Question 2: ‘How do multilingual teachers of English view the place of English in countries where it is not the first language?’ by presenting participants’ descriptions of how they use English in their lives. It then becomes possible to consider the major research question: ‘How do multilingual teachers take ownership of their profession in countries where English is not the majority language?’ Light is shed on the place of English in the participants’ countries through their observations about not only their personal involvement with the language but also their perceptions about their students’ reasons for learning English and their countries’ attitudes to imposing it.

The first question, then, can be seen to clarify the second because the strengths of multilingual teachers are made apparent by their understanding of their contexts. The chapter goes on to investigate further this important notion of context, making it possible to clarify a picture of where English fits in people’s lives and to what extent it may be useful to become proficient in it. A range of reasons for learning English emerges from the purposes to which it is put. There are also incidences where English is seen as a threat and where its usefulness may be questioned.

6.2. Local use of English

Exploring how multilingual teachers use English has the goal of clarifying firstly, what I shall call the everyday practices of language use and secondly, important cultural and identity issues, which I have classified as the effects of English use. In order to apply the knowledge gained to answering the research questions, I have classified it into ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’ effects of language use. By ‘exterior’ I mean information pertaining to daily interaction in English, showing how the language is manipulated as a tool for successfully achieving various ends. By ‘interior’ I mean the less immediately obvious effects on culture and identity, which only emerge after participants have described how they feel about using English. These effects will be examined under the headings dealing with ‘social and cultural influences on English use’. The next section, investigating local attitudes to English use, allows participants to provide their own understandings of official attitudes to English teaching and use in their countries. The aim is not

a prima facie setting down of the policies and requirements of various governments, but rather a summary of local views of these policies, expressed by individuals working in the field. Their views show the impact of official regulations on local lives. In some cases there is evidence of a mismatch between what official educational bodies have decreed and what is possible. Although this conflict is often noted, it is not always taken into account by theorists and educators at government levels.

6.2.1. Individual teachers' English use

Although it seems obvious that countries where English is not the first language are not able to provide many opportunities for using it, this fact is not often referred to in explorations of teaching the language, which are mostly limited to the classroom. The implications for teaching are profound, and deserve further attention. Responses to questions about using English in the home country (outside the classroom) indicate a limited range of opportunities falling into two main categories, namely, additional professional purposes (translation, interpreting, conferences) and talking with foreigners (formally and informally).

As can be expected, it was not always possible for participants to recall occasions when they used English outside of any professional capacity, particularly when it is not an 'official language.' Thai5f's only remembered use of English was with foreign (non Thai speaking) teachers:

When I studied masters, right and when I was studying the minor studies and for me-when I do this in English – communicate with my colleagues – the foreign teachers.
(Thai5f)

Thailand is an example of a country where English, although not an 'official' language, is a popular subject and has been for some time, as evidenced by comments about parental interest in chapter 5. Nonetheless, university teachers of English, like Thai5f, do not use it outside of study or professional communication. Likewise, in China, Chin3f could not think of any occasion which was not work-related. She understood 'outside work' as anything she took on, such as interpreting or study, that fell outside her university teaching load:

Maybe sometimes I do some interpretation or some extra ... or if I want to do some research in linguistics I often read some books. (Chin3f)

In non-English speaking countries then, the place of English is severely limited and is not necessarily a part of everyday communication. This is an obvious point but I reinforce it here because it is a frequently acknowledged fact in the daily lives of my participants.

In large cities like Bangkok participants on work placements had the opportunity to interact with foreign tourists. Sometimes the English taught did not offer adequate preparation for its use and this Thai participant remembers her embarrassment at not being able to interact at the level she would have wished to with English speaking clients, themselves often from non-English speaking backgrounds:

... when the first year I had a practicum, for work, and I did my apprenticeship at the office of Thai tourism but um it was not impressive because I think I was not ready to talk with foreigners who were not British or American, because we, the tourists that came to our office might not be British, they came from all around the world they might be Japanese. It gave me special feeling for 1 month and I did not do well at that one month. (Thai4f)

Thus there was often a gap between the learning experience and the practical use of the language. Although it is well known that more interaction takes place in English among ‘non-native speakers’ than among ‘native and non-native speakers’(e.g. McKay, 2002:13ff)), and this would be particularly so in countries where it is not widely spoken, teaching does not reflect this use because teaching materials rely on ‘native speaker’ models. ‘Talking with foreigners’ in many countries does not mean talking only with those who speak English with an accent described as ‘native’. The perpetuation of the myth that individuals learn English to interact with ‘native speakers’ in countries where English is a foreign language causes the problems experienced by Thai3f when she tried to understand Japanese speakers of English.

6.2.2. Teachers’ perceptions of student interest in learning English

I have included participants’ comments about why students learn English in this chapter on ‘Using English’ because they predict English use for future graduates. At the same time, they offer insights into local attitudes about English use and why it is considered important to study it, and so contribute to an understanding of how multilingual teachers take ownership of their professionalism, of which perception of student needs is an integral part. Keywords in

explaining the popularity of English were ‘globalisation’, ‘English as a Lingua Franca’, and ‘employment’ and, in acknowledgement of the technological revolution, ‘the internet’:

Now people spend more and more time on the internet. That is a good thing because compared with a few years ago, or to be specific, compared with when I started learning English the only thing I relied on is textbook. But now the sources of English are much more. (Chin4m)

There can be no denying this much discussed influence on English use and it hardly needs further mention, except that this reference to its use by Chin4m anchors discussion of the internet to local perceptions, in his case, China. His comments are a reminder of the variability of educational opportunity in a country as large as China, suggesting, on the one hand, excellent resources which have taken English learning in new directions, but on the other, a great lack of facilities for students from remote areas who, nonetheless, gain access to the technology when they go to the cities:

Usually ... they could watch some English programs from television, they could listen to some English broadcasting, for example radio A, and the BBC, also they could have access to some English materials by online programs and so on but as I mentioned just now, china is very big and development in china varies in different areas, cities and so on, so yeah, in different places people could have different resources that are very, very good, according to the students in my university because my university is national university – we enrol students from different parts of china (people from Shanghai, people from Nanjing, from Beijing, from those, from back remote areas, those students don’t even know how to operate - with computer. (Chin4m)

These comments reinforce the value of local knowledge by emphasising the variability of exposure to accepted global communication technology. More importantly, they highlight a concern, namely that students arriving from ‘remote areas’ to study at a ‘national university’ do not have the technological skills of their city-bred counterparts.

At a more specific level, participants state the relevance of choice of profession in evaluating the need for English. In many professions, English is stated to be a pre-requisite for admission, for nurses in the Philippines, for example:

... the nursing students they’re a select group – before they get on the course they have to have high scores and they generally have to be very proficient in English. (Phil1f)

Chinese students studying English could be preparing for a variety of careers but Chin1f makes a distinction between engineering and science majors and business majors in her university. Whereas ‘the business majors are very, very active in the classroom’, the science and engineering majors attend English classes only because it is required of them: ‘they would like to say, ‘I can do well in English but I don’t like it’.’ (Chin1f) She goes on to assert that these students are not interested in doing well in English but put in only the minimum required to obtain 60%: ‘We’re among the top 30 of universities in China so they are brilliant. They can work for a week and get a pass’ (Chin1f)

Another more general aim is recognised as the use of English in interviews:

Well, I guess they have to face the job hunting in the future and if they are good in their own trade which is English skills possibly there is more chance to pass the interviews and get hold of a position. (Chin1f)

The purpose in choosing English as a major is thus less clear, perhaps similar to the goals of students studying foreign languages in western universities. At this stage of their education, (undergraduate) English, successful completion of an interview in English is seen as a stepping stone to better job opportunities.

Chin3f describes her students’ need for English as ‘communication’, which she is able to relate to the demands of employers, thus echoing Chin4m’s earlier observation about students with superior English skills being more successful in the job market, also referred to by Chin1f and Chin2f as reasons for majoring in English:

Communication. Because in China now many enterprises or companies ask employees to have the English ability - to have the communication skills and have the business- especially the business letter writing. (Chin3f)

The catchphrase ‘communication skills’ will be picked up later in the discussion of local policies. ‘Communication’ here, however, can be seen to have a specific application to the business world, showing the meaning that Chin3f has attached to the term. Indo1f also referred to the need to ‘communicate’ but she went on to highlight the lack of communicative use of

English in Indonesia. In her department, the aim was to prepare students to teach English, and for her, this was not the same as ‘communicating’.

Oh, basically when if you look at the students, what kind of English they want to have is that er, they actually want to be able to communicate in English, basically, yes but we can’t deny that in fact English is not used in a communicative way in Indonesia. So the students tend to be – tend to count on the department while we have said that the aims of our teaching and learning is to you know to prepare them as teachers for English education, right? (Indo1f)

She suggests a discrepancy between her students’ desire to ‘communicate’ in English and her department’s aims to educate teachers. This attitude presents a contrast to that described by Phillf in Chapter 7, where she describes the difficulty of preparing students to be English teachers when their English skills are still quite basic. It highlights the complexity of training English teachers in countries where English is used infrequently and there is a need to develop both language skills and pedagogic knowledge.

The next section considers this discrepancy between, not only teaching and communication, but also between the so-called ‘communicative’ requirement and the lack of opportunity to fulfil it.

6.3. Lack of opportunity to use/practise English

This issue preoccupies many participants. Their comments emphasise the discrepancy between on the one hand, requiring English to be taught and on the other, not being able to justify its relevance for the majority of learners.

Chin 4m provided the additional information that universities in China often created their own opportunities for practice.

In Chinese universities some of the staff and the students organise some English activities and they call these activities second class, second class activities. In these activities, um, people spend much time and energy to organise each corner so at a regular place, at a regular time, people come here and exchange themselves in English. (Chin4m)

Such experiences are familiar to teachers around the world working in countries with little exposure to English. During my years at a Japanese university, I was part of the ‘English club’ which met every week for English conversation. Indolf also mentioned the creation of opportunities to use English at her university by setting aside one day a week on which English was compulsory. However, the plan met with limited success as students tended to avoid campus on ‘English only’ days.

Factors influencing English use are many and complex and at times the predominance of other languages in students’ lives make it extraordinarily difficult to find room for English, as in this example from multilingual Singapore:

Yes, the Chinese students had huge problems with English, because Singapore is predominantly Chinese speaking (yes). 7 out of 10 students in the class are Chinese just like what’s happening here, in my classroom [in Australia]. They turn left, right, front, it’s all Chinese. It’s more convenient for them to speak in Chinese, so like most Singapore schools we had speak English campaigns, we made the students pay fines for not speaking in English so the Chinese students have more difficulty speaking in English than the Malay and Indian students. Because the Malay and Indian students were the minority in the classroom and neither would understand the other’s language so they had this common language to communicate in but with the Chinese students it was different. (Sing1f)

The situation portrayed here indicates another impediment to English use – lack of immediate need to practise the language. The reason for using English here is obvious – a Lingua Franca between students who otherwise are unable to communicate but without that reason, students prefer their own language, even in class. Another interesting feature emerging here is the comparison made by Sing1f between Singapore and Australia with respect to Chinese students. ‘It’s more convenient for them to speak in Chinese’ is equally applicable to students in Australia. The conclusion to draw here is that if the need to speak English is not strong, students will revert to the language they are most comfortable with. Thus it seems inevitable that English is an artificial language which is relegated to a classroom subject in contexts where students can interact with their compatriots, even in countries where they have come to study in English.

The observations reported in this section indicate ongoing concerns prioritised by participants. They are relevant for their impact on how diverse teaching contexts are viewed. Issues concerning motivation, or lack of need for English, stand out in contrast to other contexts where students perceive English as necessary to their success in the future. The impediments to English use highlighted reflect the range of social, personal and educational factors which complicate learning, teaching and using English in multilingual contexts.

As stated in my methodology chapter, when justifying the breakdown of themes for data analysis, it is not always possible to separate learning, using and teaching English. Hence, the stronger emphasis on teaching in this section can be justified, I believe, because it serves as a reminder that the participants are teachers, but their immersion in their contexts does not permit them to see ‘teaching’ or learning’ divorced from ‘using’ the language.

6.4. Social and cultural influences on use of English

Social and cultural influences have considerable impact on how English is used, and for what purposes, in different contexts. The family, as with learning English is frequently involved. Other influences could be religious or social depending on where and with whom individuals spend time. Identity also plays a major role in choices about language use. These factors are in turn subject to socio-historical influences, especially concerning colonialism, with efforts being made to limit English use in the postcolonial era. The concept of language loss, itself a subject of research (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998; Pennycook, 2001a, and others) takes on a personal trajectory for some individuals and the combination of external, contextual factors with internal, personal feelings deepens understanding of language use in society.

This section will explore perceptions of, in particular, English use in relation to other languages in the personal and professional lives of participants. It will therefore include comments by participants on how they visualise English in their own lives alongside how they perceive its role in their society, according to what I have defined earlier as the ‘exterior’ use of English. From a personal, ‘interior’ viewpoint, issues regarding identity are raised, while from a broader

perspective, there are observations about English use in participants' countries, notably India and Singapore.

6.4.1 How languages are used in personal life: religion, family and work

Among multilingual speakers, there is often a clear perception about the ways in which various languages are used in daily life. Participants provide evidence of plurilingual understanding (see Chapter 3) in their strong awareness of these roles. Sing1f distinguishes her use of English from that of Hindus in her community, asserting that as a Catholic, she uses English in religious settings:

If I were a Hindu, I would say, yes, definitely. Categorically, because in the temple setting they'd all be speaking in Tamil. But because I'm a Catholic, in the church setting they'd still be speaking in English, yes. The only place I would consciously speak Tamil would be at home with my parents. (Sing1f)

Tamil, on the other hand, is the language she still uses with her family:

I still use it – I read, write and speak in the language ... My dad still writes to me which is a request I made when I came here because he writes good English as well. I said write to me in Tamil because I don't want to lose the language and I read my bible in both languages as well which is terrific. (Sing1f)

The other major language in her life is Malay (Bahasa).

In the school that I was teaching in there were a large number of Malay kids, Malay students so when we have parents - the teacher with a parent session we would normally have to speak in the language of the parents because they don't speak very good English (no, that's right). That's how I kept my Bahasa going but lately no, just a smattering . I do understand bits and pieces. (Sing1f)

Clearly described here are a number of different uses to which different languages are put.

Sing1f has given separate reasons for using Tamil, English and Malay. Catholicism (at least in Singapore and Australia) requires English while Hinduism requires Tamil, which is moreover her first language and the one in which she interacts with her family. In her professional context, Malay was needed to speak to members of her society who spoke little English but for her, Malay was never the first choice, even though it is Singapore's national language.

For Sing1f, writing to her father is one way of maintaining her first language; other participants, too, have noted the influence of family although. Indi1f has already noted that having a

supportive family for learning English did not necessarily allow for support in using it, as her parents did not talk to her in English:

Yeah, I used English when I wanted really, not with my parents or with my family 'cos they didn't think using it was very great – knowing it is great but using it you forget your other language, so (Indi1f)

There was, it would seem, a degree of wariness about how far English should be admitted into the daily lives of postcolonial inhabitants. Indi1f's family were happy to boast about her achievements but they did not want their linguistic identities threatened; hence they did not encourage English to be used within the sphere of the home and family, where Malayalam was the language used. English was not used at home by Sing1m, either, in his case out of respect for his non-English speaking mother.

Certainly Tamil was at home to be respectful because my mother didn't speak English you see, and I think among my siblings what was happening was we used Tamil as well as English. You know, so I think both languages were being used. (Sing2m)

At school, on the other hand:

– I would say most often it was English ... though I had a good number of Indian friends. We did use Tamil now and then but by and large I think we used English. (Sing2m)

For Sing1m, as for Indi1f, relationships with family and friends governed linguistic choices, as would be expected in these multilingual societies. Their colonial past also meant that English played a large role in their education, unlike the case of Viet1m, for whom family did not play a role in English use in Vietnam. In his situation, his career determined his use of English. In fact, he feels that he has achieved a different level in English than in Vietnamese, his first language:

And then I used Vietnamese for all communication in my culture in Vietnam. But English, I started learning English from secondary school. But then, all my professional and academic life is in English. (Viet1m)

He adds that he only used Vietnamese 'for some kind of translation. Of documents from English into Vietnamese' (Viet1m). His career choice of teaching English at university in Vietnam has meant the development of skills in academic English but not Vietnamese, which nonetheless is

not under threat because it is the language of culture and communication in the rest of his life. This is another example of plurilingualism, in that it shows an assigned place for English, which occupies a specific part of Viet1m's life.

A comparison can be drawn between his use of Vietnamese and Sing1f's use of Tamil, which she uses with her family, showing similarities in language use for personal reasons. However, whereas Viet1m would only use English in the workplace (when he could use Vietnamese), Sing1f only uses Tamil at home (when she could use English). Thus, the balance of language use shifts, depending on a variety of external contextual circumstances, including of course the colonial role, which would have influenced Sing1f's father in his control of the two languages mentioned above.

6.4.2 English in postcolonial society

The colonial spread of English has long been acknowledged as a reason for its emergence as a world language – in what is now defined as the 'postcolonial' age (Pennycook, 2001a). Many of the comments above illustrate strong differences in English use between colonial and non-colonial countries' use of English ('colonial' for present purposes referring only to former British colonies). On gaining independence some countries, such as Malaysia, opted to replace English with Malay but after a number of years reverted to English, with former Prime Minister Mahathir urging his country people to make use of English for their own ends, even though it meant adopting the language of the former oppressors:

Learning the English language will reinforce the spirit of nationalism when it is used to bring about development and progress for the country... True nationalism means doing everything possible for the country, even if it means learning the English language (Mahathir, 2005, cited in Tsui, 2005, cited in Beaven 2005: 48)

Since Mahathir's time, Malaysia has changed its beliefs about using English in education but his comments illustrate changing attitudes to English at official, government levels. However, they do not take into account Indil f 's sentiments about using a colonial language. For her there is a kind of leftover quality about English in India which leaves some doubts about whether its use should be insisted upon:

I don't know if it's a language barrier, or trying to fit a foreign language into a native context. You're trying to take something which is there because the British left it, right? we inherited it now what do we do with it? You can't throw it – they already created - left a whole class of Indians, well I suppose who served them but who spoke the language and they had elite positions in those days – in the fifties and sixties – now it's not that much that's carried on and they're trying to fit it to a local culture but it doesn't really. (Indi1f)

She raises the very real suggestion of a kind of limbo where English had been left behind for a local class who had learnt it and grown accustomed to its cultural trappings. Now, the variety of English they spoke was anachronistic and without relevance for the society following independence. Thus there could be a whole class of society alienated from its roots by the colonists and finding it difficult to re-establish their place. The linguistic and cultural benefits they had gained would be obscured by the political aims of their nation, intent as it was on throwing off the shackles of colonialism. A consequence of such changes in political attitudes could well be individuals finding themselves in an uncomfortable situation from which escape in any direction would entail some kind of cultural loss because they had been educated to respect one language and later in their lives found that another was considered more desirable.

In summary, historical and political differences between colonial and non-colonial nations seem to account for many differences not covered under the term 'globalisation'. Attitudes to English today are less tinged by memories of an oppressive past, and there is less confusion about the need for English as the language of global communication. China, for example, seems to have embraced CLT at an official level but still needs to discover a manageable way of implementing it, given the lack of exposure to English in most of the country. The reasons for promoting English are comparatively recent, and can be defined as commercial rather than cultural. Therefore there is a kind of dominant pragmatism which is not obvious in India, another emerging economic giant, but having a colonial past. The strong influence on identity resulting from a colonial past is evidenced by Indi1f's comments and contrasts with opinions expressed by Chinese and Thai participants.

Implicit in the postcolonial experience is also an awareness of language loss, which has impact on two levels. On both the personal level and the national level, there are, nevertheless, other factors to consider than a colonial past, as the next section will show.

6.5. Language loss and identity

... if you do not pay attention to language death, to culture death, you passively accept, you blindly accept everything, you do not know where you are, you do not keep your identity. (Chin4m)

The phenomenon of language loss, recognised above, represents a universally expressed concern with linguistic identity. After this reflection on the effect of language loss on identity, Chin4m referred to two Nobel Prize winners as exemplifying his perception of identity across cultures and nations:

Yang Zhenning and Li Zhengdao the Nobel prize winners many, many years ago [1957] simply they were American citizens but when people talk about these two people, they still talk about Chinese, so no matter where you are, no matter how high your social position is, your identity is there, so when you do something well, people are proud of you but when you do something bad then people feel ashamed of you. But your root is still there, ... younger than American Chinese, new Chinese. This is very interesting. (Chin4m)

These words express a view of identity related to nation and for Chin4m, they seem to support beliefs about language and identity. Although he is not explicitly referring to language here, the trajectory he has taken indicates a progression showing the importance of acknowledging one's roots. If language is allowed to die, then this identity will die too and for Chin4m, being Chinese is an identity one is born with and even changing one's citizenship, as did the Nobel prize winners in his example, will not affect this. These comments are relevant here because they illustrate the depth of feeling which some participants have about their identities, and consequently, about their languages.

Language loss is sometimes resisted through the implementation of national policies aimed at retaining language use. In its broadest application, it refers to languages becoming extinct but participants show that there is also a personal dimension to language loss. It can be experienced not only as part of one's linguistic environment, as Phil1f describes in the Philippines but, at a more personal level, it can lead to a sense of cultural deprivation, as described by Indi1f. Language loss through immigration is also acknowledged by Sing1f, referring to Singaporean families in Australia, while Chin4m's observations reflect his awareness of various allegiances. The relationship between language loss and identity is, furthermore, manifested in the resistance

strategies adopted by Thai3f, in which identity is preserved and consequently loss is not allowed to become a dominant factor.

6.5.1. Loss through education

Indi1f has become concerned about not understanding cultural features of her first language because her education has been mostly in English.

... because I belong to a generation that, I'm not sure about the literature of Malayalam – probably not Indian literature but Malayalam literature's different -uh, the interpretation of their philosophy's different, like even linguistics, Malayalam linguistics is different – and the language as a whole – apparently it's very complicated – I didn't learn all these things and now I think I should have. (Indi1f)

She has here separated what may be termed the intellectual and academic aspects of her language from the personal and the communicative. Again, there is a great deal of complexity in these observations, particularly in the participant's separation of formal and informal aspects of language use, which she seems to value differently, possibly seeing knowledge of the formal aspects of Malayalam as part of her cultural heritage, while the informal, communicative aspects of English are the tools for a successful professional life. Once again, there is a contrast between the exterior use of the language in her society and the interior reflective process which she is working through. There is a sense of loss in her story, as she recalls her student days:

I don't know- you look at the language very deeply, not just learning the language but it becomes part of, part of you. Because I know that people in the Malayalam department, the literature department, they're extremely proud of the wealth and the – student numbers are very low – they are just very low student numbers but,er, yeah, they are different. They never used to wear tracksuits and they never used to wear western things and eat bread and do all the things westerners do but they ate rice and coconut but there was this conflict always between the English and the Malayalam literature departments – yah, but I thought, oh, they're old-fashioned, you know – now I look back and I think that was also a culture and I didn't recognise it, I was so blinded – that's what I'd been taught. Now coming here, I feel that I look different anyway, I am different anyway, I can never take English and call it my own. I'm always back there and I don't even have enough of that. (Indi1f)

In this case the push for English in some educational institutions has resulted in a reduction of personal cultural identity. As a student, Indi1f believed that her own language and culture were 'old-fashioned' and consequently she neglected them in favour of English. However, since coming to Australia, she feels that she has not only lost the opportunity to embrace her own

culture but that she has also been somehow deceived into taking on a language and culture she can never be part of. Her attitude to her cultural and linguistic identity has changed quite profoundly and she now believes that part of herself has been left behind on an educational journey that she had been advised to take. English is not really ‘hers’ but nor is Malayalam because she neglected it for English. Her observations expose the complexities underlying the choices that some individuals are obliged to make when they reach certain cultural and linguistic crossroads.

6.5.2 Resisting language loss through limiting English use

In many cases, participants make positive efforts to maintain their first language. At the same time, there are instances of limits being placed on English use in some contexts, both the professional context and the personal one. Professionally, these Thai teachers used English to communicate with non-Thai speaking teachers but they did not necessarily want to engage with these teachers outside of the workplace:

When we feel bored we approach the American but he knows that we do not like to speak English with him, every teacher is- but Bob is like - every teacher is friendly but him – when we see him at the corner then we turn the other way. (Thai3f)

Other aspects of identity come into play here, including personality and individual inclinations so that socializing with a foreign American teacher in English for example, is not a preferred activity. A possible reason for this could be the perception of identity as being bound up with the first (in this case Thai) language. Using English might be seen as losing control of one’s identity when one feels less able to express oneself to a foreigner. What also needs to be taken into account is the interpersonal aspect of communication as an influence on language use so that if a teacher is not perceived as ‘friendly’ then it is not worth the effort of approaching him or her.

Linguistic identity can be seen to be attached to perceptions of what languages mean to individuals, including how they feel about using them. For English language teachers, it is often difficult to separate it from aspects of professional identity because performance in English can determine how teachers are perceived. There is a sense that using English may make them vulnerable to judgments about their professional skills:

Work is work and colleagues is colleagues – colleagues are friends but not with foreigners ... I think I try to communicate well but I have to think before I say anything in English with anyone whose English is better than mine... – could be work, the way you communicate with foreign teachers or your boss might think she is not good at English at all – it's possible (Thai4f)

The teacher quoted above also described her feeling about her identity:

I did not have the accent like the foreigners because my identity is my language. My mother tongue is Thai. So I know my place ... And I know that [my accent] is not good but it is alright because I was born in Thailand and that's my best. (Thai4f)

Being able to define one's identity in this way has given a measure of confidence to Thai4f because she does not expect her English accent to identify her in the same way as her Thai accent does. Moreover, she is comfortable with her English accent and her ability to interact with English speakers: 'I think the place, we know the place in our career. ... we know that we're not going to imitate or copy the accent.' (Thai4f) The place of English is clear for this participant because she has shown confidence in her role as a Thai teacher of English who is able to make her own decisions about when she wishes to use English.

6.5.3 Perceptions of language loss in the local environment

Four different contexts for language loss are described below. The first example is from the Philippines, and deals with loss of heritage languages. The second discusses the effects of immigration from Singapore to Australia and the third, what may be termed socio-historical influences in Singapore. The fourth example considers postcolonial effects in southern India. Of course, these influences are not exclusive to these contexts and have been widely documented in the literature (see Chapter 7) but their recognition by individuals who have experienced such phenomena brings to light the many issues surrounding them.

In the Philippines, a tension is defined between writing in English as a Filipino, and thus using a local variety of English which expresses the local identity, and writing in one of the endangered local languages. It seems that using a recognised local variety of English has the advantage of reaching a wider audience, while using a local language could be seen to promote its conservation:

Well, we have two main literature courses that are required of all university students so one is Filipino literature in English so we actually have a body of literature written

in English – Filipino writers who’ve decided you know instead of writing in their dialect they want to write in English for a broader audience. (Phil1f)

Reaching a wider audience, however, could be at the cost of a particular language or dialect:

That’s actually a concern, especially in rural areas or in smaller cities where a lot of the dialects are actually disappearing and my dialect for example, it’s the only dialect in the Philippines – it’s called ... and that’s a concern because a lot of the writers prefer to write in English or in Tagalog – that’s the national language – small dialects, small languages are actually you know, disappearing so yah, that’s of concern and a lot of writers in the Philippines do prefer to write in English. I guess it’s a more prestigious thing, you know to be able to write in English – to write a short story or a poem or an essay, etc. But there are some nationalists who write also in the national language and in the regional dialects. (Phil1f)

Phil1f here expresses an opinion similar to that of Indi1f (above): ‘knowing it is great but using it you forget your other language.’ The prestige of writing in English can be compared to that of knowing it, but in both cases, local languages may suffer.

A different context in Singapore means that Sing1f does not see English as a threat but her concerns increase for languages taken out of their home environment:

Unless you start learning English at the expense of your own language and thinking that you are going to be an English man, it’s not a threat. Having said that, in the Singapore, in the Australian context, my worry is – OK let’s look at a small group of people I’m very familiar with: 12 families that go to my church – Indian families. Not many of the young ones are speaking their language any more. They have become monolingual and that’s a worrying trend for me. My daughter was lucky enough to come in at the age of 18 and so she still has some language left that she can communicate with her grandmother and with me as well and with anyone if she wanted to who doesn’t speak English. But the young ones - they seem to be losing their language. (Sing1f)

Sing1f has described an important difference that she has observed between maintaining language in a multilingual society and maintaining a language in a society where one has immigrated. She at first denied any concern about language loss, having earlier mentioned her own efforts to retain Tamil, but as she began to reflect on others in Australian society she could detect a pattern of language abandonment.

These observations illustrate a range of attitudes which cannot be glossed over by theories about ‘language loss’ or ‘post colonialism’ because they show individuals dealing with the problems in their own way, using an understanding based on long familiarity. Members of these varied linguistic, cultural and social contexts can be said to own the contexts they describe through their intimate experience of a range of factors.

Sing2m considers English to be replacing Malay in Singapore as the ‘working language’. Malay, it can be inferred, occupies the same place for ethnic Malays as Tamil does for Sing1f and Sing2m, as a first or heritage language, but beyond that it has given way to English for Singapore’s multicultural population. English seems to have crept in as unofficial first language in Singapore, raising some complex issues about language loss; it would appear that Malay is diminishing in importance for the current generation. Sing2m recalls a formulaic style of Malay when he underwent national service, where the language was:

... basically, English. But the commands are like, like Latin prayers – they were in the ostensible national language called Malay, but no one really, except for the Malays I think – most people – English was the working language but with a certain proportion of people – it might – they did use Malay as a bazaar language, as a market language but that was being, very prominent you know –when I was young... I could speak a little bit but I think in terms of the society Bazaar Malay was used as the market language but that was changing already when I was growing up. In my years as a teenager and all that, people began to use more and more English.
(Sing2m)

The comparison of Malay with Latin is interesting on two counts: firstly, it highlights the limited use of Malay, in the national anthem, as the language of ceremony occupying a role similar to that of Latin in the Catholic Church but on another, more profoundly cultural level it shows cultural understanding transcending boundaries between East and West with the analogy of Latin prayers in the Catholic Church simply dropped into a conversation about language use in a non-western context. The unlikely juxtaposition of Latin and Malay indicates an ability to creatively cross cultural borders which is seldom recognised in stereotypical definitions of cultural behaviour. These have an unfortunate tendency to separate beliefs and behaviour in their insistence on difference so that a Singaporean using Latin to make a point about Malay could not easily be accounted for. ‘Bazaar Malay’ indicates a specific use of Malay at a less formal and more interactive level but it is a use which is also disappearing, being confined to ethnic Malays.

Given Singapore's strategic position as a trading hub, Globalisation can be advanced as the main reason for the erosion of its 'national' language.

In the much larger context of southern India, Indilf portrays a different situation, where there is less satisfaction with English:

Education system – they talk about the 3-language formula. And how – many of them like English but there's an element of – English is a bit colonialist. There is an element of -, with my liking towards language, I don't always agree with that. (Indilf)

Indilf has previously expressed her enjoyment of English (Chapter 5) and does not seem to subscribe to the view that it should no longer be taught. There seems, however, to be growing support for Tamil:

There is a lot of Tamil. Tamil is much more higher than English but if you know English then it's wonderful but if you know Tamil it's even - well that's – yeah The recent change is they want to go back to Tamil in the schools but there's been a whole movement saying well you can't because where will they go after year 10? They'll be disadvantaged so there are some who send their children to vernacular schools and there are some who send the children to your private schools, particularly English medium schools. (Indilf)

The change in attitude is not uniform and it seems that some families still see English as more prestigious, particularly if they are seeking to send their children to university, where English still seems to hold sway as the preferred language:

... like if I go home, like if I compare my cousins who are vernacular and I went to an English medium school, they find it really hard to come abroad or to go to English universities ... so, it's a bit of a disadvantage now. (Indilf)

Societies which revert to using English, it would appear, are likely to encounter more difficulties if they are former British colonies than if they have adopted the language because of the forces of globalization, because there is a history of lost, even stolen identity which has left bitter memories. While reverting to Tamil is a positive assertion of linguistic identity it would seem also disempowering on the global stage and Indilf's society is caught, like many other countries (cf. the Philippines, below) not knowing which path to take.

All of the above describe situations where language loss is likely. As mentioned, they all refer to situations which have been widely researched, but I have included them here because they illustrate how multilingual teachers are uniquely placed through their own experience to understand changing attitudes to language choice which are happening in their own lives. I am not suggesting that these experiences will necessarily prompt teachers to act in certain ‘politically correct’ ways to ensure retention of endangered languages. What I am suggesting is that there is a deeper awareness of how languages co-exist, and what effects they have on culture and society both for the individual language user and for the surrounding society.

6.6. Beliefs about local policies for English use

Local policies appear to be driven on the one hand by perceptions of economic gain and on the other, by the need to assert national identity. Thus making English a compulsory subject goes hand in hand with some nations’ growing economic presence, e.g. China and Vietnam. In contrast, affirming the importance of local languages as in India, Singapore and the Philippines, allows choices in the expression of identity through language. In the recent case of Vietnam, it would seem that a need to attract global investment has dominated, while Singapore, already comfortably established as a global centre for commerce, has turned its attention to its heritage languages. China, too, having recently become a powerful force in world markets, has seen English as a tool to help its development while India, with, like Singapore, a colonial past, and aiming to establish itself on the world commercial scene, perhaps recognises some degree of conflict in how to manage its language education policies. These at least are some of the impressions that emerge from participants’ observations, although they would need further study to be validated.

In this section, the local is closely intertwined with the personal, because I am not presenting the local policies in their official dimensions, but rather as they are seen by inhabitants working under them, as it is their perceptions which add richness and meaning to external understanding of the workings.

6.6.1 The influence of Communicative Language Teaching on government policies

The most widely expressed use of English reflects current ‘communicative language teaching’ practices and can be seen to be prompted by Globalisation as it is based upon an understanding that no other language but English is adequate for global communication. This has led to a phenomenon called ‘the commodification of language’ which, according to Block and Cameron, ‘affects both people’s motivation for learning languages and their choices about which languages to learn’ (2002: 5) as languages are seen to represent ‘linguistic capital’ (Bourdieu 1991).

According to this participant the influences of ‘communication’ are evident in learning, using and teaching English:

And er, especially for English learning in China the government asks for universities to put more emphasis and pay more attention to the communication skills and the universities ask the teachers to put more emphasis on the communication skills in their class and also the teacher ask the students to do more communication work after class. (Chin3f)

Chin3f here delineates the links in the chain of educational policy in China, and indeed for most countries whose governments make decisions about their citizens’ education. Communicative Language Teaching has caught the ear of governments wishing to implement appropriate language learning policies. While the difficulties of developing CLT methodology in China have been referred to above it seems that universities, teachers and students have all been asked to focus on ‘communication skills’.

6.6.2 The example of Singapore

Singapore, as a postcolonial, multilingual society, is a fruitful example to study with regard to local policies. In fact, language use in Singapore involves a complex range of issues, ranging from the role of ‘national’ and ‘official’ languages to the implementation of policies involving ‘first language’, or ‘mother tongue’. First of all, the national language is not widely spoken:

... in fact Malay was hardly ever referred to as the national language though officially it is still considered the national language ... it is still officially the national language – the national anthem is in Malay. But most Singaporeans now, I mean the younger ones, will not be able to speak Malay unless they are of Malay origin you know, so English seems very much to be the working language in Singapore. (Sing2m)

In practice, the ‘national’ language of Malay occupies a similar position to the other ‘mother tongues’ listed below by Sing1m. Therefore, its role is effectively replaced by English, the ‘working language’.

I think, I’m not quite sure how Malay – with the recent changes in Singapore – but I think the government – more or less the government has come to accept it. Bilingualism is a policy of Singapore. But the concept of bilingualism has undergone a lot of changes. So recently, over the last couple of years we have introduced mother tongue B subject in Chinese, Tamil or Malay. Which means that really you do have a fairly decent command of the language. ... our students have the option. (Sing2m)

Sing2m sees the inclusion of ‘mother tongue B’ in the national curriculum as a positive step because it enables students speaking Chinese, Tamil or Malay as a first language to acquire a ‘fairly decent command of the language’. The parents’ level of education cannot always be relied on to provide the background all students need for developing a good control of their first language.

Adding to the complexity of Singapore’s language policy is the predominance of Chinese in the country, alluded to by Sing1f above when discussing the problems of Chinese students learning English. It becomes difficult to see which language should be given the status of national language, and how the various ‘heritage’ languages or ‘mother tongues’ are best dealt with. Singapore can be said to represent a microcosm of language use, illustrating the multiplicity of issues that come into play when seeking to acknowledge individuals’ rights to speak the language most closely related to their cultural backgrounds.

There are two effects stated below about Singapore’s bilingual policy. The first, concerning identity, comes from Sing1f and affirms the value of the policy. When asked about the danger of losing one’s cultural identity, she stated:

No, it’s not a concern because of the bilingual policy. Because you still have your roots being taught in school your literature, your culture is being encouraged through that language. You can’t learn language without the literature and culture. (Sing1f)

She believes that the bilingual policy allows students to retain their own traditions and culture by developing skills in their first language while learning English. On the other hand, Sing2m, while not exactly refuting the above opinion, provides further information:

Mm you see for those who don't want to make the effort or for some reason or other they feel that they are not inclined to learn the language – so a lot of people have said that they're emigrating to other countries because of the bilingual policy. And by bilingual policy I mean the mother tongue. (Sing2m)

These comments illustrate the complexities of implementing language policies in multilingual societies where different values are assigned to different languages, so that families who do not speak a 'mother tongue' at home do not approve of their children learning one at school.

In the eyes of some people then, the mother tongue does not need to be taught because they have identified more pressing needs – such as surviving in a world dominated by English. What is driven home to us by these comments is that individuals make their own choices about how language influences their identity. In some cases, it can be assumed that if a language is not widely spoken, its speakers may choose to ignore it and focus on the language which brings the greatest capital.

The comments by these two Singaporeans enable us to delve below the surface of an observed national policy, described as bilingual. There has been an attempt by the Singapore Government to confer linguistic identity but it has not been accepted by all Singaporeans. In fact, local voices reveal the existence of objections to a scheme which many from other contexts may consider laudable.

6.6.3 A comment from the Philippines

It is possible to hypothesise, though, that Singapore, by making space for the 'mother tongues' of its inhabitants, has reduced resistance to English, unlike in The Philippines, another multilingual country. Phil1f described the position of English as follows:

Yes, it's, it has been called the official language in education and it's also considered the second language in the Philippines and it has a very high status (yeah) a very high status. Of course, there's a debate on that, there's a debate on that because the nationalist – the nationalist group feels we should promote the national language

more and our own dialects and not - treat English as the most important language in education business or whatever but that's the reality. (Phil1f)

There seems to be an acceptance by Phil1f of English as 'the reality' but also an unwillingness to let go of heritage languages whose importance she acknowledges throughout her interview. As in other countries, economic and cultural values are at cross-purposes until a role for English is found that does not stifle local languages.

6.6.4 Requirement to learn English

In Vietnam, changes in policy were related to political change, which saw a growing need for English as the country opened its doors to western investment. A general thrust towards English has meant making it a requirement for teachers as well as other professionals:

Um, first they ... it is a compulsory subject so that means it is regulated by some kind of policy level ... There has been a need, for English, er, we call it the boom of English teaching English and the requirement for English proficiency at some kind of level, from the 1990s, actually from the late 1980s, since Vietnam implemented the open-door policy, and opened to the world and then a lot of foreigners started to come in either as tourists um, business and joint ventures and development and projects and so on, that created different kinds of jobs and it boosted the demand, the need for English use. (Viet1m)

English is also compulsory for students in Thailand and Indonesia while in parts of India there is uncertainty about the preference for the local language, as in Madras (see comment by Indi1f, above). Policies for English use then, are at some distance from the everyday lives of people using and teaching the language because, as we have seen, there is often very little use of English and, moreover, little interest in using it. A parallel can be drawn between the teaching of foreign languages in English speaking countries, where it is often difficult to persuade students that there is any use them learning a language which they are never going to speak. Participants with other languages in their lives seem to indicate an acknowledged purpose for English, set against a concern that it not be allowed to dominate, as in the observations by Phil1f, above.

These examples from , albeit a limited number of countries, are important because they illustrate the huge range of historical, political and cultural influences impacting on English use in so

many parts of the world. Their presence needs to be signalled in order to avoid making unthinking reference to globalisation as justifying universal attitudes to English use. A heightened awareness of local influences in diverse contexts obliges English language teachers to admit that ‘global’ encompasses many varieties of ‘local’ which all depend on the understanding of unique sets of circumstances, which by definition cannot be ‘globally’ applied.

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter has examined local beliefs about ‘Using English’ by presenting and analysing what participants have said about where they feel English belongs in their lives. The data has revealed a range of influences from diverse local contexts. The all-pervasive influence of CLT is perhaps responsible for promoting the idea that teachers who have learnt English as an additional language use it whenever possible yet this seems not to be the case. On the contrary, there is evidence of a withdrawal from acceptance of English into one’s personal life. Even when participants actively sought opportunities to use English in their student days, they seemed not to feel the same urgency after making teaching English their profession. In many cases, participants demonstrate a sense of control over their language choices through the confidence they express when describing them.

One of the most valuable contributions made by participants to the theme of ‘Using English’ has been their portrayal of English in their daily lives. In particular, they have shown that they have discovered ways of limiting English through firm but non-aggressive modes of resistance. These have included making efforts to speak their first languages in appropriate contexts, expressing confidence in their use of English in the ways they choose, developing an understanding of the connections between identity and language and recognising the purposes to which English can realistically be put for their students.

What has emerged most powerfully from the data is that multilingual teachers are capable of assigning a place to English that can be clearly defined to inform teaching approaches, particularly regarding their students’ needs. Their ways of dealing with these needs will form an important part of the content of the next chapter. Yet there are still uncertainties to be resolved concerning questions of how identity is affected by language use. These result in some cases

from the historical yoke of colonialism but when that is absent, there still seems to be a need to consciously evaluate language use in individual lives.

Classifying the data into ‘exterior’ and ‘interior’ approaches to language use has enabled me to clarify how participants see language used in their contexts (exterior) and how they feel about using it themselves (interior). Exterior observations are necessary for understanding the needs and goals of language use, including lack of opportunities for practice, while interior reflections are important for explaining how individuals preserve, or indeed develop, their identity and culture in the face of what is sometimes seen as an assault on these attributes by an alien force.

The data reveals concerns about the role of English felt even by those who are promoting its use. Regarding overall attitudes to use of English, there seems to be a wide spectrum of opinions, ranging from a comfortable acceptance of English alongside other languages in use to a sense of discomfort about ‘takeover’ attempts by the juggernaut of English language. In general, government policies exert strong influences over how and where English is used, with an overall focus on business communication in the global marketplace. These policies include the allocation of a ‘national’ language in multilingual societies, a concept taken for granted and hence barely considered in majority English-speaking countries, yet having strong implications for culture and identity. Making English a compulsory subject at certain levels of education and in specific discipline areas is also an important factor.

The next chapter will focus on the central theme of ‘Teaching English’, building on the foregoing to explore the contexts in which teachers are currently grappling with a vast range of issues and demands.

CHAPTER 7 TEACHING ENGLISH

7.1. Introduction

Chin1f: Well actually I joked with them [my students].... I said the worst thing that can happen is you become us!

Chin2f: You know the ... group is composed of teachers and postgraduates. The other day we had a talk with one of the postgraduates and she told us 'I want to be one of you, I want to be a colleague of you'

Chin1f: so I said that is the worst thing that can happen - you become us! Which is not so bad! (Chin1f & Chin2f)

Enthusiasm, expressed with humour in this bantering exchange, continues to be a motivating force in participants' career trajectories; in fact, the teachers, Chin1f and Chin2f, appear to be role models for the postgraduates, ensuring continuing interest in the profession.

This chapter will analyse the research data which reflects the views and reflections of the participants with respect to the teaching of English. The breadth of experience encompassed by participant accounts exposes an enormous range of contexts, approaches, attitudes and opinions defining English teaching in the twenty-first century. Aspects of professional identity revealed in these accounts contribute to this emerging picture, which encourages the rejection of previously discussed ideas relating to native speakers and globalization. It thus becomes possible to reinterpret the 'global' in terms of the 'local' as viewed by on the spot witnesses, eminently qualified to clarify issues regarding, in particular, teaching methodologies, teacher education, student needs, cultural understanding on a professional level and the influences of local policies.

Since the individual English teacher is at the heart of this study, it makes sense to begin with how the choice to enter the profession was made, as explaining this choice sheds light on the immediate local context, be it politically, economically or culturally dominated.

7.2. Professional identity

Professional identity has already been shaped to some extent by the activities of learning and using English, as has been demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 6, but, as has also been discussed previously (Chapter 1), these three activities of learning, using and teaching English are interconnected, particularly in their continuing influence on teacher identity. Reasons for

entering the profession, of course, constitute an integral part of one's professional identity. For many participants, the enthusiasm described as part of the learning experience has carried over into professional life and, in fact, was the dominant influence in their choice of career, although other factors also played a part. These included local opportunities and participants' recognized ability in English, for example, through winning prizes for their proficiency.

7.2.1 Reasons for becoming a teacher

Enjoyment of language learning has already featured strongly in participants' memories of early learning and for many, the same enjoyment has remained with them. Phil1f described happy memories of her mother's early influence on her English learning and her fondness for reading in Chapter 5 and this eagerness has taken her into professional life:

I think I learnt more about the language because I read in English and that's one of the things that I encouraged my students who were really struggling – I would tell them you have to read in the language as well. (Phil1f: cf. Chapter 5)

This enthusiasm obviously adds another layer of expertise to her teaching skills as it has given her the confidence to advise her own students.

Sing1f has been involved in English teaching for 30 years and is still able to express her fondness for her work: 'The reason I'm teaching is I love what I do.' (Sing1f) Enthusiasm also led Sing2m into teaching; for him the chance to take on some teaching, almost without thinking, was a life-changing experience: 'I taught in some primary school – teaching English language and maths.' (Sing2m). The initial foray into English teaching was not really part of a lifetime plan but an accident, and in his case, a serendipitous one.

Ah, I can't say – just looking for a job and you know – it was available and yeah, the interesting thing was it changed my entire life – one, I got into teaching and I found that I liked it so I applied to become a teacher and interestingly I was offered, the choice was given to me to become an English teacher or a Tamil teacher but I opted to become an English teacher so I went for pre-service training for 2 years in the institute of education in Singapore. And I, erm, you know I became an English teacher, English teacher on top of maths and science. Erm, I went on to teach for 4 years in a primary school, after which I applied to the university and I got a place in the English language, er, in the arts program there, majoring in English language and English literature and applied linguistics. (Sing2m)

This experience led to certain preferences:

I think English language - linguistics and English you know, so I did 3 years of study at the national university of Singapore. Then I qualified for the honours program and did that in English language. Both in my final year and in my first year I won a book prize for being the top student ... and then somehow the remarkable fascination that I had – sort of the feeling that, you know, you’ve found a niche you know that kind of idea ... (Sing2m)

Sing2m’s story of his entry into English teaching shows strong involvement at a personal level as he admits that a chance foray into teaching changed his life, and then, in addition to receiving prizes as the top student, he was held to his choice by a ‘remarkable fascination’ which seemed to develop slowly over his time as a student, so that he made choices which took him down the pathway of becoming an English teacher. In Sing2m’s narrative, the career pathway is clearly delineated – from Chapter 5, with his fondness for reading as a child, to the growing interest in teaching, to the stage prior to embarking on PhD studies, where he became involved in examinations:

Yes, so I was invited by the ministry of education to join them after my fourth year of secondary school teaching (mm) I initially of course declined but somehow they came back to me and I thought I’ll give it a go and they gave me a 3-year contract. I was offered the opportunity to work in the examinations branch of the ministry of education and those years were very interesting. (Sing2m)

Sing2m’s story offers one example of where initial enthusiasm might lead: in his case, recognition of ongoing commitment by his employers who, as a result of his above-described work, sent him to Michigan to do his Masters.

Thai3f and Thai 4f’s stories take a different trajectory, as for them it was personal backgrounds that provided inspiration. For Thai4f, it was her English lecturer’s example that led her to change her ambition from the popular career of flight attendant:

She was the erm, my, English teacher and she taught the secretarial course. She dressed very well and she was confident and she had a very warm family. Her husband was professor of engineering and later he became the president of the university so she had just one sentence for the class when one student asked about her family and why she wished to be the teacher and was she happy with her life, she said if you don't want to get rich you can have a happy family and work with your husband at the university ... and I thought wow, that's a good idea and from that point on the university teacher is my aim. Before, I wanted to be airhostess, flight attendant (Thai4f)

Witnessing success at close quarters thus had an impact. Overall, the degree of contentment and general satisfaction with life displayed by her English lecturer seemed to have affected Thai4f.

Thai3f did not begin her university studies with the aim of becoming a teacher. On the contrary, she thought she might follow the same path as her fellow students, working as secretaries for companies in Bangkok, but she did not enjoy working in Bangkok away from her family. Moreover, her BA program in English did not prepare her for teaching. In the end, her main inspiration was that she wanted her parents to be proud of her and so she continued her studies to become, firstly, a college teacher:

I did not expect to be a university teacher. I took a test to be a teacher at college level. I felt that I want to be a teacher - because of students - but I did not have any inspiration like you, I just think of my relationship with my parents and I want to make them proud, and to work for government because to work as teacher is government worker. (Thai3f)

For Thai3f, the personal motivation stemmed from a desire to please her parents while the pragmatic reason associated to this was the prestige of being a 'government worker' and having a respected position.

Thai5f was another teacher whose earliest memories about English learning were that 'I loved it!' She claimed not to have thought about her future until she obtained her master's degree and then decided teaching was a 'big job' and a way of 'making a contribution', adding that she felt she was an 'idealist'.

Viet1m made up his mind to go into English teaching when he entered university, which coincided with Vietnam's opening up to investment from the West, in particular the USA. He progressed from teaching English as a student to training as a teacher, and has now reached the stage, as will be seen further on, of training teachers himself, although as he observes, he did not originally have such goals, starting out with the aim of

... getting good marks and nothing else. Then when I entered the university, in 1989, early 1990s when I was in the second or third year there was a boom in learning English at that time and many, many teachers got a lot of money from teaching English and I started teaching English as well to get some money when I was in my third year and then from that time I said OK, I start to get something from English and I developed it and later on I was taught to be a teacher of English. (Viet1m)

Viet1m thus followed a similar route to Chin3f, who, after enjoying the experience of teaching during her college years, opted for teaching over her major of interpreting. As mentioned in Chapter 5, she was often sought after by parents to teach English to their children and so there was a strong local interest in her expertise, which no doubt influenced her decision:

And, er, when I came into college I chose English because I like it and er, specially my major was interpretation, not teaching English and just because I like teaching because I often did some tutor – I was tutor often in my college time so at that time I determined to do some teaching work, especially college English. (Chin3f)

Reasons for becoming English teachers, then, ranged from the highly personal to the contextual, all of which provided degrees of satisfaction in a variety of ways, from 'finding one's niche' to pleasing one's parents, to supplying a local need. The general demand for English in Vietnam and China made teaching it a good choice of career, perhaps parallel to the demand in English speaking countries taking in non-English speaking immigrants. In Thailand, English teaching seems to be highly respected, which is not always the case in India, where there is also emphasis on teaching local languages. In the Philippines, English teaching is also respected, alongside recognition of the need to preserve local languages. In Singapore, there is a pragmatic acceptance of English, although efforts are made to retain heritage languages.

This summary, being based on the life experiences of individuals from the countries mentioned, does not claim to be an absolute representation of attitudes in those countries. However, it provides valuable evidence of the multitude of factors impacting on teachers' lives and its

validity is enhanced because the individuals describing their attitudes to English teaching are currently researching aspects of ELT themselves and have spent time teaching English in their own countries, as listed.

7.2.1. Cultural influences on professional identity: India and Australia as examples of a cultural interface

Professional identity also encompasses awareness of particular cultural traditions belonging to an individual's past:

It's just – ever since – all the literature we used to read, it's like – students never questioned, even when the master was sitting under the tree, imparting the knowledge, people used to leave their homes and go to the forest but they never used to question the master because this philosophy was in the storybooks that we read so in none of the books we read would you ever question the master – so even today it is somewhat like that so (Indilf)

The situation has changed today:

Nowadays – in those days people were, not everyone had access to knowledge
But now it's not like that - it's different – there's a lot of mass production going on in teachers' areas as well. Every second person you know is a teacher. (Indilf)

Indilf shows strong awareness here of an educational cultural tradition that has changed over time but in the process has left a residue that is apparent today, despite what she terms 'mass production' in the teaching world. The age-old respect for the master was still within her consciousness and it is difficult to find a Western parallel, given the medieval monastic tradition where learning became, literally, a cloistered activity, in stark contrast to a teacher 'sitting under a tree' and accessible to all. Her comments show how different learning traditions, having undergone different cultural and historical influences, surface in an individual's consciousness when reasons for a particular phenomenon need to be found.

Differences in local attitudes to teaching can be quite striking and have a strong effect on teacher identity as Indilf found when she moved from India to Australia. She had told her Australian supervising teacher about her work in the slums of Madras, intending it to be confidential:

I thought that would be between her and I but when somebody else came she said ‘oh, do you know this is a teacher from India and you know and she did some work in the slums and that was so embarrassing for me (I know) and I said why did you tell her that and she said ‘that’s good, isn’t it?’ and I said, ‘no, it’s not good – it’s connected with poverty and it’s connected with that country’, ... – I thought that was very shameful (certainly not) that’s what my family would say. When I worked in Madras they said ‘is this all you can muster? After doing all this masters, is this all? So I talked to my dad yesterday and I said you know I’m meeting Anne and she’s doing a PhD in Canterbury. ‘Oh is that so? Very good! Yeah, oh you should keep in contact with such people.’ (Indi1f)

What is striking in this anecdote is the degree of culture shock experienced by Indi1f when she received two directly contrasting reactions to her slum work. She was familiar with the local Indian reaction, as expressed by her family, that working in the slums had no professional value and consequently she was quite unprepared that the local Australian reaction should be one of approval and admiration. The cultural gulf becomes even wider with her father’s subsequent comment, which seems to attach more importance to his daughter meeting a PhD candidate from Canterbury than working with underprivileged people! Yet it would be superficial to see these attitudes as bound by culture alone; many Australian parents would value their children’s achievements in the same way. The implication here for professional identity is that perceptions about what is professionally valuable can depend very much on surrounding beliefs, which may be acquired according to culture or social class and are sometimes not challenged until transported to a new context. Indi1f seems to have been assailed by a number of culturally complex issues peculiar to her own circumstances. She characterizes a view of culture which depends on individual reaction to these circumstances as she measures and interprets attitudes which seem to need explaining in new contexts (cf. Holliday, 2011: 41ff)

This section has encapsulated the more personal attributes of the multilingual teacher, as participants recalled factors that were important to them in making the decision to join the ELT profession. These were driven by global circumstances, as more opportunities arose, and by enthusiasm, with individuals expressing their enjoyment of English. Further influences on the evolution of professional identity derived from cultural traditions, involving perceptions of how others filled the role, as well as how the profession was seen from different viewpoints.

7.3. Teaching in context

Drawing on the data from my research, it would seem that greater value should be attached to experiences in the local context because these enable participants to define and adjust their teaching methods. Participants offered evidence that they are adapting key concepts such as CLT and learner-centredness to take account of local conditions. Concepts such as Critical Thinking are also being evaluated to enable student needs to be met as are imported teaching materials, which all too often in the past have lacked relevance for contexts of which the authors had little knowledge.

This section, in providing information from participants about how major concepts are reinterpreted to deal with local conditions, considers examples from particular countries, namely China for CLT, with further comments from Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. The relevance of learner-centredness for China is also discussed, followed by brief reference to other important aspects of the teaching process: regarding academic writing, with an example from Vietnam, and materials, with an example from the Philippines.

Another important aspect of teaching context raised by participants is the presence of students from a variety of linguistic and cultural backgrounds in classrooms in countries where English is not widely spoken. Through participants' experiences, this feature is recognised as having an influence on teaching, as is the impact of other languages spoken in the environments described. Within the range of contexts explored, there is a shift away from English-dominant societies, clarifying further, with the ultimate aim of answering the research questions, how multilingual teachers position themselves as English teachers in the societies familiar to them.

7.3.1. Some local perspectives on CLT

They believe in paper tests much more than communicative activities so we give less weight to the communicative tasks. Really but in the new approach we need to assess the students by the communicative competence but we hardly have time to catch up with the new curriculum in 15 weeks. (Thai1f)

Two of the most common anxieties expressed by teachers about CLT are summarised here by Thai1f. The first is that local examination bodies require students to take tests which do not match notions of communicative competence. Secondly, teachers themselves have little time to learn the main features of the 'new approach' of CLT.

As the most pervasive English teaching approach in the last several decades, CLT has come to dominate all discussions of language teaching. Inevitably, as a consequence of its global application, the term itself also embraces a wide range of approaches, as Holliday points out:

One of the sources of confusion is that the word ‘communicative’ refers to a whole range of aspects of the approach: teaching communicative competence, teaching language as communication, having students communicate with each other and with the teacher and ensuring that the methodology communicates with the student and other concerned parties. (1994: 167)

CLT was discussed at various levels by participants, depending on their level of involvement or their level of responsibility. Some, including Chin4m and Viet1m, were able to give clear overviews of how they saw local teachers reacting to the approach, while others described the way they used it with their students.

Chin4m gave a very detailed account of attitudes to CLT in China, including the problems faced by many teachers in coming to grips with it. His principal concern seems to be that teachers have only a superficial grasp of the concept and do not understand the sociolinguistic, discourse or strategic aspects:

Communicative competence – communicative teaching – is a very hot topic in China. ... Even for me, only recently I think I understand what communicative competence is but I don’t think for myself I understand it thoroughly and still, for talking about this issue I don’t think many teachers understand what communicative competence is. For many teachers they think as long as we talk in English as we are actually in the process of improving our communicative competence but in fact it is not that simple. Because, in fact, communicative competence involves many more other aspects so linguistic competence is only one. Besides linguistic competence there are also some other competences for example sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. ... I think for some teachers they try communicative, or teaching without good understanding of what communicative competence is; their focus is still focusing on interaction but judging from the concept of communicative competence interaction is not enough. Yes, but in recent years some people question about communicative teaching in China. What people are concerned with most in the linguistic environment is- we lack natural teaching environment specifically. (Chin4m)

By ‘natural teaching environment’, Chin4m means, as he goes on to say, an environment where English is naturally and easily spoken, of course not realistic in China. Chin4m’s summary of the way CLT is understood in China suggests that many teachers lack awareness of the theory underlying the approach. The issue seems to centre on the difficulty of insisting on a method which depends on a generally unavailable set of circumstances, namely an environment for natural spoken communication in English, or in default of this, teachers trained to replicate such an environment. While it may not be desirable to go back to former ‘traditional’ language teaching methods, it is important to find an approach which teachers are comfortable with in their particular contexts.

Viet1m develops this concept of appropriate methodology a little further when he discusses CLT, emphasising the difference between the western context where the term originated and the Vietnamese context where he has witnessed its application:

Yeah, erm, in fact the methods that are popular in my context, people talk about now, are communicative language teaching, ... but the way that teachers understand the approach and the way they apply the approach, into their teaching context is different from one to another and I’m sure that it is different from the key terms of communicative language teaching for the – even for the West. (Viet1m)

He suggests that there are advantages in the approach, despite the differences:

Um, always some good and bad but the good thing is we keep up with the development in the terms of teaching methodology all over the world and um, relatively to communicative language teaching as to language development for the students. (Viet1m)

Viet1m seems to see CLT as a valid starting point for teachers in his context at the same time appreciating that their interpretation of the term may have changed considerably since its inception in the West. He affirms the relevance of global knowledge but claims that there needs to be a balance between what is globally upheld and what is locally applied. He makes the important point that there are clear differences between the English speaking context where CLT was developed, and the non-English speaking context of Vietnam, thus echoing the comments made by Chin4m, above:

Yeah ... another important point that I just want to mention here is that the CLT with the focus of developing the communicative competence was initiated in ... an English speaking context but in my context, it's not an English speaking context, so that is a very different context, ... as I know when I talk with the teachers. (Viet1m)

On being introduced to CLT, it seems that Vietnamese teachers recognise its value but are not sure how they can make such an approach relevant in their contexts:

They can see that CLT is the good one but they do not see whether the student needs, that kind of competence – because the majority of the students – secondary school or maybe lower secondary school students come from the rural or mountainous areas where they do not have any opportunities to communicate with foreigners and they learn English for what – they learn English to pass exams (exactly) so at that time they – whether the student needs communicative competence or not is not recognised or mentioned (Viet1m)

A clear contrast is expressed here between the ideology of CLT (developed in an English-speaking context) and the local exam-oriented context, making it difficult for teachers to accept a method which has no relevance for the exams their students need to take. Importantly, Viet1m's comments, after this portrayal of the rural context (which he comes from himself) almost exactly replicate what was said by Chin4m about the 'environment to practise English.' He sees the problems faced by teachers thus:

Um, the real, the environment where they teach. And the ideologies of the approach on the matter that they should apply. Um, I think the biggest one is the [teaching]students do not have the environment to practise speaking English. (Viet1m)

Moreover, the mismatch between what the student teachers have been taught, and what they have to face in their teaching environments is not, it seems, sufficiently addressed. Not only do their students need to pass exams which do not involve CLT, but also there is little opportunity for the development of 'communication skills', seen as the main thrust behind CLT.

In the Philippines, drawbacks to the introduction of CLT were also noted:

Yes, but when, when the class was changed a bit – when they started introducing communicative language teaching for example, you know, and we've had meetings on this several times and we've talked about communicative language teaching and how in these courses the students should be given more opportunities to communicate- more speaking, you know with each other – more speaking with peers, more writing activities, etc. But not all the teachers are really into communicative language teaching mainly because they feel the students are not ready for it. Mainly because they feel they need to learn more about grammar before they can start communicating so there's a whole debate around that. (Phil1f)

Reactions recorded here recall what may be expected from any traditionalist core being faced with a 'new' approach: the feeling that more 'grammar' is needed smacks strongly of a traditional bias. However, the Filipino teachers are not operating in a western context and they may therefore feel that, in addition to being asked to embrace a new teaching approach, they are being asked to, possibly, abandon practices that are part of their own educational culture, which is bound to be different to the Western cultural setting of CLT. Consequently, these teachers' judgments of what students may be 'ready for' cannot easily be interpreted by someone from outside their context, i.e. from a 'Western' setting.

Participants' understanding of their students' needs was related to a large extent to their use of CLT methodology, as discussed above. Hence some of the criticism of CLT was a result of lack of appropriate contexts for students to develop their communication skills. Considering the Chinese context, Chin4m was doubtful of how far CLT should be prioritized.

Part. I think English in China has to be practical how to accept- or we have to face the fact that it is hard for learners to have access to English language environment and we have to accept the fact that in comparison with learners' reading and writing ability maybe listening and speaking are relatively weak. I think it's natural. I think in the situation where English is a foreign language I think it's practical. It is realistic to pay attention to reading (mm) because this is the major channel for learners to have access to English. While we focus – we emphasise the improvement of learners' speaking and listening abilities we have to consider this issue on the basis of reading. If we accept that reading is still the major channel for learners to access English we have to base the training of listening and speaking on the basis of reading because reading is to some extent the focus of language input...with this input we could consider how to improve listening and speaking abilities. (Chin4m)

Here there is reference to the difficulty of accessing an ‘English language environment’ and a way of dealing with this issue is proposed, namely to use reading as the basis for developing listening and speaking skills. Viewing a wholly ‘communicative’ approach as not matching the needs of Chinese students, Chin4m wishes to provide them with a strong basis in reading before exposing them to what he considers to be limited listening and speaking opportunities.

Regarding the impact of CLT approaches, both Indo1f and Thai5f recall their own experiences:

Basically we refer – what we refer to is communicative language teaching.

That’s – you know – as far as what we teach is to persist in the students to be able to use English in communication so – we teach them, we help them to be able to use English for communication – it can be in writing or speaking and, you know, to get the message. (Indo1f)

However, it seems that Indo1f is more concerned about her students’ grammatical knowledge, as she claims that ‘the message can come across’ when they speak but when they write, ‘they say that the grammar is really difficult – just with a simple thing, you know subject and verb agreement – many times you know- but when they are writing by themselves – you know – we see it – it’s not there’ (Indo1f). For Indo1f, it seems that the CLT approach is less important than the need to teach grammar; her beliefs are perhaps similar to those of the teachers referred to in the Philippines by Phillf, above. Indo1f admits to an understanding of CLT as ‘English in communication’ but she is keener to engage with a grammatical focus, believing that students can ‘get their message across’ when speaking but with writing ‘we have to think about grammar’ and this concern seems to outweigh the relevance of the communicative approach. Moreover, her attitude to CLT resembles that of the Chinese teachers as described by Chin4m, in that she does not exhibit a detailed knowledge of the approach.

Thai5f attaches slightly different emphasis to the use of CLT and extends her interest to student performance beyond the classroom. She describes a learning process which begins with the course book and takes students from classroom practice to ‘the real situation’, thus summarising with considerable accuracy the purpose of CLT:

Yes, because our class is supposed to be the CLT and so - in a class like integrated skills so I can do whatever I think can improve their - their ability to communicate and use - like - reading to be applicable to the conversation skill, dialogue skill and then ...have some activities that encourage them to use the language in the classroom even though they are not sure that they can make a link to the class content from the course book content to out of class to the real situation but anyway, sometimes i think that maybe I force them too much but without force teacher can't succeed.
(Thai5f)

With this outline of the procedure she has adopted, Thai5f has captured the essence of a well-designed communicative approach, as she has not neglected the ultimate goal of having the students perform outside the classroom.

In line with their experience, Chin1f and Chin2f have developed their own interpretation of CLT:

Chin1f. Well, my understanding of communicative method in a classroom is I have to keep my students busy. ...

Chin2f. Keep them busy, keep them talking, doing some meaningful activity ... yes, yes.

Chin1f. That's my experience, when I keep them really busy they feel really happy.
(Chin1f & Chin2f)

Chin1f and Chin2f appear to rely on a particularly active interpretation of CLT so that for them the main focus of the approach is that students must be actively and purposefully involved in the classroom – an important feature of successful language teaching and one which they may have felt was missing from the teacher-centred approach which had dominated their own learning. An important flow-on effect of CLT, then, seems to be that it has encouraged teachers to focus more strongly on the purpose of learning English, drawing them away from the insistence on passing tests, although it is still a struggle to do this, according to Viet1m and Phil1f.

This brief survey of opinions about CLT from around the globe serves to illustrate how popular methodology sometimes outlives its first impact. Participants select from many different aspects of the term which are emphasised according to particular situational requirements. The keyword 'communicative' took English Language Teaching in new directions when it was launched but it

now appears that the changing face of the profession is calling for a redefinition of key terms, requiring a new emphasis to acknowledge new voices.

7.3.2 The relevance of contextual knowledge

Sharing their students' cultural and educational environments has, overall, given participants insight into their learning needs in a variety of ways. Their attitudes to their learners are expressed in their discussion of three topics. The first topic, 'learner-centredness' shows how a universally known concept can prompt a discussion of a country's history and how it has influenced learning. The focus is China although this country provides just one example of the many directions in which a topic can be taken when a local background is applied, with the concomitant historical, political, educational and social influences. The second topic, 'Academic writing' presents valuable insight into the advantages of a shared background for understanding how to teach writing skills. This time the focus is Vietnam. The third topic, 'Materials' is related to a third context, the Philippines, and highlights the need to know about contextual background before assessing what learning materials are going to benefit students.

Learner-centredness is an important concept which has played a part in teaching methodology, especially the development of CLT. (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b: 91) It did not arise very frequently in the course of conversations with participants. Thai5f acknowledged its relevance, but Phil1f said that in her context, it was not used, while Chin1f and Chin2f brought it into their discussion of teaching context in China. In fact, Chin1f and Chin2f take their comments on learner-centredness in an unexpected direction, comparing the teacher-centred direction of their own, quite recent education with the current situation and in so doing they consider changes outside the classroom in Chinese society.

Chin1f. And I think it's very interesting because in my time and M's time because it's roughly the same period of time we would – all the classrooms were basically teacher-centred

(Chin2f. Yes, yes besides linguistics) we turned out to be very cooperative learners. And today we are talking about student-centred learning or learner-centred. I didn't know because I don't find my students very cooperative in any type of classroom.

Chin2f. Mm, I agree

Chin1f. They are not active. For every type of teaching method there is one thing that is definitely important and that is the cooperation between learners and teachers.

We were in a period of time when life in China was (Chin2f. Very simple) yes, very simple and for children today, even for the postgraduates that you see on our program, they grow up in an environment in which they probably do not desire anything because their parents have provided them fully with every kind of material thing that they desire.

Chin2f. They're the focus of the whole family because of the policy, you know the one-child policy.

Chin1f. They are centres in the family and now they become centres in the classroom (Chin1f & Chin2f).

Chin1f implies that regardless of learner-centredness, she finds cooperation essential for learning to progress. She seems to doubt the effectiveness of a learner-centred approach for students who are already at the centre of their society. Her critique of learner-centredness moves away from the concept as defined in TESOL and places it squarely within her view of modern Chinese society, with its policy of one-child families. Thus different sets of historical and political circumstances exert important influences over beliefs about teaching approaches. Her colleague, Chin2f, in the same interview expressed her beliefs about the current teaching context, opining that the learner-centred classroom made demands of the teacher that were conducive to good teaching:

Today in China in my university teaching is pretty demanding, pretty challenging. Actually it's a good thing students as children are the centre of the family and the whole society. And actually they are much more knowledgeable and more affirmative than we were. Because (Chin1f. the information age) The positive sides of the learner-centred classroom is that the teacher must prepare a lot and must learn a lot before the class begins (I agree) and before he enters the classroom. And um, I agree that a good teacher is actually a good learner and is clever at and a good organiser and a good manager of the class. (Chin2f)

In their discussion of learner-centredness both participants are once again more preoccupied with changes external to classroom methodology so that the creation of a 'Welfare Services Officer', for example, would prevent the re-introduction of a 'teacher-centred' classroom, at least as they remembered it:

Chin1f. Well definitely if you're still having a teacher-centred classroom today, it won't work because students have changed.

Chin2f. Students will complain to the Welfare services office. But when we were young students we had no opportunity to complain to anyone.

(Chin1f & Chin2f)

Finally then, this discussion of ‘learner-centredness’ from the perspective of two Chinese academics, illustrates how a concept from a different teaching environment may trigger reactions and opinions that were not part of the original definition but are important to the participants as well as to outsiders seeking to understand the context. In this case, the use of the term ‘learner-centred’ was a springboard for the discussion of issues pertinent to the participants’ immediate environment.

Having a common first language also enables a clear perception of student needs, as in Viet1m’s understanding of his students’ writing. He believes they have difficulties:

... because of the concept of how to write and what to write – what is considered as the right kind of writing. Academic writing is one example of what is different from Vietnamese students writing – certain requirements and even when they have learned the technical things it’s not something they can write and that naturally they can produce in the way that they have learned but they’re often influenced by the way that they have done for so long, linguistically and culturally. (Viet1m)

Although a great deal of research has been done on academic writing (e.g. Canagarajah, 2005), a knowledge of the linguistic and cultural background, and the experience of having travelled the same journey, allow for clearer contextual understanding of what needs to be achieved. Viet1m claimed above (Chapter 5) that he used English at a more ‘academic’ level than he did Vietnamese and he is therefore in an excellent position to understand the linguistic and cultural chasm that must be bridged by students wishing to study in English. By distinguishing between what he does normally in Vietnamese and what he needs to do professionally in English, Viet1m indicates a sophisticated understanding of the place of each language, and of the necessary skills related to that place.

Comments on teaching materials often included regret that the materials available were not appropriate to the local context. Phil1f, for example, is concerned that some teachers may not be sufficiently concerned about adapting foreign materials:

The context is different, activities are different and you know these sort of things we have tried to talk about because there are some teachers who would try to choose an activity or a reading and not be so concerned about the learners – is this going to appeal to them, is this even relevant in our context? (Phil1f)

She goes on to give an example of how local knowledge is invaluable to the successful adaptation of foreign materials. She mentions the need to tread carefully with classes of both Muslim and Christian students, recalling an incident which had fanned religious sensibilities to dangerous levels:

Like I remember that – erm, this probably won't – this probably doesn't mean anything to you but there's um, a point in our city when the Muslims were really fighting for independence (I've heard something) yeah, yeah and some articles are not very sensitive to this sort of thing – these issues, yeah. (Phil1f)

Furthermore, there is a perceived need to incorporate current local thinking into teaching themes, so that English can be seen to embrace, rather than stand outside of, local values:

Right now we're really trying to encourage – not just in the university but in basic education we're really trying to encourage nationalistic themes (Mm) so these are the sort of themes we're trying to encourage – themes that deal on values for example so those are the sort of things that are encouraged - but also different kinds of themes like family, friendship, and in English 101 class for example they're even trying to incorporate things like technology – I mean you can talk about technology, you can talk about the world you can talk about different cultures, you can talk about different countries – that sort of themes are fine. (Phil1f)

However, she sets limits to what she believes Filipinos will tolerate:

... because I think I would still consider Filipinos in general as being conservative – maybe not as conservative as the Middle East but not – there are still themes – you

never talk about sex for example – that’s just something that you don’t talk about.
(Phil1f)

Phil1f here displays important local knowledge which would ensure an approach to English teaching consonant with her context – an understanding of overall themes dominating her society and a sensitivity to what topics would be tolerated. Such awareness contributes to what Canagarajah has called ‘Resisting Imperialism in English Teaching’ (1999b) because it reduces the impact of an alien culture. English is not seen an instrument of political or cultural change but rather, as a way of enhancing knowledge, in particular with respect to technology, or promoting values considered important in Filipino culture.

With a similar regard for matching content to local issues, Viet1m described an example of adapting both topic and method:

... sometimes I help the students to translate but I always make it clear to the students- both kinds of students who learn English as compulsory course and English as a specialization, that translation, when you learn reading for example, so we have to develop certain skills to do reading – so when you are doing the reading at that time, so translation is forbidden, never translate because (Yes in those cases you wouldn’t) yes but in other cases OK, I remember one case – we talked about development project in a third world country and we talk about the sound of the frogs - development, yeah when they bring the logging and they take the land from the people in development projects and then they clear out all the crops so people do not hear the croaking any more, or their music, something like that OK really similar to the situation in Vietnam and we ask the students to translate so the translation at that time we focus on how to use – discussion – the knowledge of grammar of English, vocabulary to understand the meaning and when we have done it they meet to apply the information they have got to Vietnamese, in the way that Vietnamese people have – it cannot be like word for word translation – it becomes, it’s not Vietnamese any more – OK in this way we use translation, the translation is a whole, I would say science – but you should not always apply translation into, I would say reading, or doing the listening or something (no) It means that I still use translation in my class for a very clear purpose (Viet1m).

The two important points arising from this example concern firstly, the choice of content and secondly, the use of translation as part of the method. The content – an article on an environmental issue – illustrates a strong local connection with the disappearance of frogs croaking as their habitat is destroyed and takes the language learning activity into students’ lives more profoundly than a commercially produced textbook. The translation activity derived from

the text is developed in such a way that the students are able to think about how the language works. In fact, Viet1m has described here similar principles to those embodied by the ‘strong’ version of CLT (Chapter Two), which was not acknowledged by any of my participants, but which involves understanding the discourse features of language. For Viet1m, these are subsumed under ‘translation’ which he has used to show the differences in the structures of English and Vietnamese – a relevant activity when teacher and student share a first language. The use of the first language enables him to point out how English translated into Vietnamese word for word is ‘not Vietnamese any more’ and from there it is a straightforward step to infer the reverse process for English. Learning how languages are structured is in this way made comprehensible through contrast with a known linguistic system.

7.3.4 Teaching foreign students and using languages other than English

When looking at other, distant contexts of English teaching, it is often easy to imagine a monocultural, monolingual setting. In China, for example, it might be imagined that all students are Chinese. This is not necessarily the case, as Chin3f pointed out in her description of her teaching context in Nanjing. Her students come mainly from the Middle East to study meteorology, for which they need to spend two to three years studying Chinese:

Because our university is a university of meteorology ... the only one authority about meteorology in China. (Chin3f)

The layers of language, culture and subject are particularly interesting here: Arabic speaking students come to China to study meteorology in Chinese but they have to take two or three years to study Chinese before they can begin – and they learn Chinese through the medium of English, although their English may not be especially proficient. Therefore Chin3f, in addition to teaching English, has used English to teach Chinese to foreign students, whose first language is not English. Thus the context of English use has many aspects and this use of a lingua franca for teaching would be interesting to explore further. Chin3f admitted to finding it extremely difficult to teach Chinese through English. She was also able to contrast the teaching of both languages, saying that the Chinese students had no choice about what they were to learn in English but with the students learning Chinese she was able to negotiate, as they ‘expected to

have a choice'. She therefore uses different approaches depending on whether she is teaching Chinese or English students:

I change some things a lot. Ah, especially I ah, first of all I negotiate with them – so what kind of materials would you like me to teach to you and what kind of things are you interested in – so I can change a lot from our Chinese students, you know Chinese students, they are - have no choice. (Chin3f)

Being an overseas student in China, then, seemed to entitle students to more freedom about their learning than being a Chinese student of English. English teaching thus can be seen not to be a one-way, isolated process; other languages are being taught alongside it, and this may require teachers to adapt to different learning cultures.

Chin1f also taught Chinese to overseas students but more straightforwardly, as her students had come from the US to learn Chinese. Having observed that Chinese students feel themselves to be under greater pressure than Americans because they are only children whose parents require them to succeed, she claimed that both groups would be easy to teach under the same conditions:

They are both easy to teach once they are given the kind of um choice and the pressure free environment. I feel that if my students can have more choices to decide what type of English they want to learn, what type of course they would like to participate in I just am very positive they would be more active, if they are given the choice. (Chin1f)

The claim made by Chin3f, above, that Chinese students were allowed limited choice of learning English activities is implied here. Chin1f appears to feel that Chinese students would be 'active' in the classroom, if they had the same freedom as the American students, who are more eager to participate and do not exhibit the same level of anxiety. These experiences show the comparisons that can be made when speakers of another major language, in this case Chinese, find themselves teaching their own language to foreigners.

Attitudes to teaching one's own language rather than English can vary, however, as some participants indicated at a research group meeting in Adelaide in 2008. In response to a paper I presented as a revised version of one delivered at Cutting Edges 2008, 'The Well-educated English Teacher', there was discussion of how one went about teaching one's own language

rather than English. In the course of this discussion, Chin4m stated that he felt inadequate to teach his own language because he felt he lacked knowledge of China's vast culture, while Viet1m reported that he gave up teaching Vietnamese to an advanced student in Australia after two weeks because he felt unqualified. A comment on the Thai situation was that there were differences between teaching Thai to Peace Corps volunteers in Thailand and teaching in Australia, but generally, 'EFL methodology', i.e. CLT, was adapted to teach participants' own languages. There is a noticeable contrast to be made here with the myth of the native speaker English teacher, in that there is no assumption that being a native speaker of one's language qualifies one to teach it. On the other hand, having studied English to the level that they were now undertaking PhD research in Australia, these participants did not express the same doubts about teaching English in their contexts. (Research diary, 1st October 2008). It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for these differences in attitude; it is possible that a lower demand for languages such as Vietnamese or Thai has meant that multilingual, linguistically aware individuals have thought less about the complexities of their languages than about English. Being aware of these complexities, they feel they need to have studied them in greater depth to become successful teachers. On the other hand, the demand for English, and the 'native speaker' myth, have encouraged – and enabled – under-trained native speakers to be employed as English teachers.

Using elements of data reconstruction (Holliday 2004), I have chosen to recall this incident here because it reveals ways of thinking which are contrary to mainstream attitudes about native speakers being ipso facto capable of teaching their own language. It shows language teaching professionals themselves – but not native English speakers – corroborating beliefs expressed in the literature review chapters (cf. Leung 2005) about the doubtful supremacy of native speakers as teachers.

The range of teaching situations described in this section illustrates the complex interaction of factors having a local impact on aspects of a global enterprise. There are examples of the varied roles played by English in education, sometimes as an intermediary for teaching other languages. Of particular interest are contrasts to be seen in educational approaches and cultures, as shown between American and Chinese students, where the differences seem not to lie in the students themselves, as is often believed in cultural comparisons, but in educational approaches.

7.4. Working with foreign teachers

For present purposes ‘foreign’ indicates teachers who, for the most part are (though not necessarily) ‘native speakers’ of English, but who are always foreign nationals in the countries discussed below. Participants, particularly from Thailand and China, have described in some detail their experiences working with teachers from other countries, thus adding a dimension to perceptions of professional identity and, importantly, clarifying major aspects of the ‘native speaker myth.’ Memories of working with foreign teachers included a range of advantages and disadvantages, dependent not only on local policies and conditions but also on interpersonal and cultural factors. They also illustrate how being a ‘native speaker’ is not an essential part of a teacher’s professional identity, which includes a number of variable factors. Native speakerhood is an important attribute but is not always seen as a sufficient qualification in the absence of other major skills, such as cultural sensitivity or grammatical and linguistic knowledge.

7.4.1 Perceived advantages of foreign staff

The picture emerging of foreign teaching staff attributes less merit to their teaching skills than to their value as native speakers of English able to provide models of the target language. Thus their popularity seems to result from their usefulness in teaching oral skills and their knowledge of cultural aspects of English. Chin3f claims this advantage for foreign teachers: ‘They like to talk. This is the first priority!’ (Chin3f) Overwhelmingly, foreign teachers are recognised not so much for teaching ability as for providing important practice for developing speaking skills, especially in contexts like those already discussed, where there is limited access to spoken English. All the Chinese participants gave this as the first reason for employing foreigners: ‘... they are usually arranged to teach oral English ...’ (Chin4m) and it is also the main reason in Thailand and Indonesia.

As a result of this fondness for ‘talk’ Chin3f goes on to claim that her students in fact make enormous progress through interaction with foreign teachers and become more enthusiastic about seeking her help to develop their oral skills:

They have improved a lot. Improved a lot from talking to international teachers, international students and through their preparation work they like to do so. Some students often ask me to give them assignments like the oral test, the oral English or role play or anything else. (Chin3f)

Indo1f also asserted the popularity of foreign staff at her institution:

... and some students from other countries – English is not their native language but they speak English as well. They like, they really like - the students - in some classes who were not taught by the foreigners – they really wanted to be taught by foreigners. (Indo1f)

According to these opinions, the reasons for employing foreigners are somewhat superficial, as there is no mention of important professional skills, simply the intrinsic ability of a ‘native speaker’ to speak their own language and model it for others.

Making use of this advantage, Thai1f organised successful team-teaching arrangements in her department:

I have more than 10 native speakers – most of them are responsible and usually we set up the conversation class for them ... team teaching and one Thai teacher with a native speaker because we have about 50 students in one class and I know it is hard for them so I take, I set up one Thai teacher with the native speaker and let them work together.
(Thai1f)

In fact, according to evaluations, student impressions of foreign teachers were generally positive. Continuing employment of teachers depended on confidential student evaluations, which were quantitatively evaluated. Occasional examples of poor performance included a 56-year-old conversation teacher who ‘wouldn’t let students talk’; although they were a mature, part-time group, he claimed they were ‘not well-behaved’. Students awarded him a score of 46%. (From subsequent conversation with Thai1f on 30-04-09, noted in research diary).

Foreign teachers were seen as useful repositories of cultural knowledge but this, again, had no particular reference to teaching skills. Thai3f and Thai4f, for example, found foreigners a useful resource when faced with unexpected idioms and concepts, especially when they were using foreign materials:

Yes, we use British or American textbooks and I feel that it is not right but they [education authority] will come and there will be a lot of questions about credit if we produce our own textbook so we ... we’re not there yet but we’d like to try. (Thai4f)

In this way, foreign teachers were able to supplement the textbooks. Thai3f and Thai4f felt that imported textbooks were not appropriate but before producing their own, they had to find a way of dealing with the requirements of their education authority. In the meantime, they rely on foreign staff for cultural explanations, as in this query about ‘salad dressing’:

The teacher asks the foreigner, asks Mr Bob again, about salad - salad dressing and the dictionary doesn’t help us – it doesn’t provide the context with the meaning and we have to ask Bob, Bob is very helpful! We say ‘you know that you are very helpful’ (Thai3f)

Hence establishing friendships with foreign colleagues often had an extremely practical goal:

We have to build a relationship with them so that we will not lose face when asking them some silly questions.’ (Thai3f)

From these reminiscences, it can be inferred that there are particular roles assigned to foreign employees, according to local perceptions of their value. Generally students enjoyed interaction with foreign staff.

7.4.2 Perceived disadvantages

On the whole, advantages outweighed disadvantages in participants’ testimonies but some concerns were voiced. Speaking generally, Chin4m described one disadvantage of foreign teachers as their increasing youth, similarly to Chinese teachers, discussed below. He implied that lack of experience was a common failing among foreign staff whom he went on to define as young graduates who choose to visit China immediately after obtaining their degrees, although learning Chinese does not seem to be their motivation since he claimed that ‘most of them have not learnt any Chinese’. Therefore, they have no particularly useful linguistic skills. Their role in the global enterprise of English teaching probably does not deserve to be negated, but rather should be inserted into a professional hierarchy as providing a useful level of support. These young graduates would probably fit the definition of ‘backpacker teachers’ (Anderson, 2002) who lack qualifications and experience, but may be employed because of a shortage of qualified teachers, as corroborated by Chin1f and Chin2f below.

Thai2f was taken aback by some of the attitudes expressed by foreigners, including this individual at an international conference:

Yes because he wrote that he went to Thai TESOL(mm) last year , which, I went there too and he said that he wasn't surprised why Thai kids had awful accent (oh) because Thai teacher has awful accent. (Thai2f)

She went on to explain how this comment ran counter to her expectations, derived from her reading of the literature:

Because we talk about native/non-native inner circle, outer circle, expanding circle, (Yes that's right) we have to respect but because English is Lingua Franca (Yes) we have to respect the accent, like Indians speak English, Singaporeans speak English, so we have to accept people and try to understand, but when he critiqued like that I was shocked. (Thai2f)

She found it strange that some foreigners do not practise the principles she had read about in 'centre-based' research, such as having tolerance for different accents. Because she had read about this 'respect' in centre-based publications, she expected to find that 'native speakers' would practise it when she encountered them professionally.

The following observation refers to oft-repeated comments about grammatical knowledge. Thai3f preferred to ask her local colleagues to answer her questions, but was happy to rely on 'native speakers' to explain cultural factors:

Very helpful to explain about culture – I don't ask them about grammar – they just say 'it's like that' ... (Thai3f)

This is in contrast to the knowledge of local teachers. '... some Thai teachers are very good and I ask them every time.' This comment echoes suggestions elsewhere in the data that foreign or 'native speaker' teachers were recognized as not being knowledgeable about grammar (cf. Chin1f, Indi1f). It indicates a division in beliefs about language teaching between 'native' and 'non-native' teachers which could reward further exploration. The stereotypical perception is that 'native speakers' do not consider grammar important, whereas 'non-native speakers' value it highly.

‘Talk’ in the classroom, despite being considered an advantage, also had a negative side, according to Thai2f who was disillusioned after observing a class taught by a ‘native speaker’:

Because I , from my presentation last week I told you that, I want to learn something more from native speaker – how they teach my student so that maybe it would be interesting activity I can use in my class as well but, I found that it’s useless!
So, I’ve said, that the first group that I have seen, they just only talked to student and - about, for example in my university we, we followed the syllabus - we have the syllabus– so we have to follow that and the topic like um, music, for example - they just let students talk about music, and um actually in one lesson we have to teach grammar, and we have to teach listening, speaking, reading, but they just let students talk. (Thai2f)

Here again, there is a perception that grammar was not being taught and Thai2f felt that the syllabus was being neglected, as the foreign teachers they ‘weren’t just employed to teach conversation.’ (Thai2f)

Thai2f’s disillusionment seems to have resulted from the fact that she was not able to learn anything useful from observing what she had expected would be a superior level of teaching, because it was delivered by a ‘native speaker.’ There was no value to her in ‘just talk’ because such a ‘method’ did not provide any approach that she could use in teaching to a required syllabus.

In addition, there is a twist to understanding the popularity of foreign teachers in Thai2f’s impression of their performance; she claims that foreign teachers require less work and bestow higher grades, ensuring that students flock to their classes. For her part, she tried to encourage students to read outside class but she felt that native speakers were too easy on their classes: ‘... like - flexible, like - come to class, talk, do a little bit of work, no homework’. (Thai2f) It is not clear whether these negative perceptions were the result of a misunderstanding of teaching approaches but it certainly seems that there was a lack of communication between foreign and local teaching staff in this instance: ‘talk’, for example, might have been managed inappropriately, or its relevance may not have been clarified.

Thai participants sometimes felt that knowledge of their culture was lacking:

...Yes, culture shock, like in the real classroom with my teacher when I was a bachelor degree student, raised his feet and put them on the table, pointed towards

the student and we were young and we did not know how to tell him that the body – the lower half and the top half – and he did not understand – he didn't see the point why we look uncomfortable in the classroom (Thai3f)

'Culture shock' is most frequently used to describe experiences encountered by individuals living abroad but in this case, the 'shock' was delivered locally by a foreign visiting teacher. Other examples of inappropriate behaviour involved dress; wearing short skirts in the workplace (Thai1f) did not show respect for Thai culture.

The reverse of the above situations was experienced by Indi1f when teaching in Australia, regarding both linguistic and cultural knowledge:

I wouldn't say so because I'm teaching a module at (X College) on grammar and they don't know their own language Yes, and you go into an English classroom and they're not even concerned about it. Things like: 'but we all think - but we always say it like that' - but aren't you interested in how it works? You're being a teacher after all! (Indi1f)

Indi1f's students were Australians who were undertaking 4-week training courses to obtain a certificate in teaching English so that they could travel overseas as 'backpacker teachers'. She was amazed at their insouciance and lack of interest in learning about their own language before taking off on these journeys.

At the same college, she found herself stereotyped as an Indian, this time by her Chinese students:

... and they told me, oh people in your country - they sing very well they dance very well, they are high IT people ... so I said, oh yeah, that's true, but yeah, I said, look we all don't dance and sing, I can't dance or sing – it's the first thing they ask me (Indi1f)

In this case, an example of another variation is illustrated – foreign students away from their local environment, with a teacher whose background is different to the one they commonly associate with English, but of which they still have a stereotyped view. This portrayal of a reverse to the 'native speaker' situation is a reminder of the prevalence of stereo-typing; it is not unidirectional but occurs across a range of intercultural situations. Culture shock, in the examples in this section, is felt by teachers as well as students.

According to the data, recalled disadvantages stem from cultural misunderstandings and disappointed expectations about teaching approaches. Most notably, many participants assigned a high value to grammatical knowledge and believed that ‘native speakers’ would hold the same views.

7.4.3 Qualifications

In many countries, the need for qualified English teachers far surpasses availability, which means that ‘native speakers’ sometimes have the edge over local ‘non-native speakers’. Another area of uncertainty surrounds qualifications of ‘native-speaker’ staff.

Chin1f and Chin2f were aware of the ‘native speaker myth’ and had noted reference to it at a recent conference in the UK:

Well at the international conference we had at the beginning of this summer, one of the seminar is on native-speakerness and the lecturer said that someone who says that he is a native speaker does not necessarily qualify as an English teacher We have a lot of foreign colleagues, foreign English teachers, yes they are first language, native speakers but they are not good teachers. (Chin1f)

She claimed that in some instances, ‘native speakers’ were not trained but that their department was required to employ a certain number and that they were usually given ‘speaking classes’ or pronunciation. (Chin1f & Chin2f)

The situation here is similar to that in Thailand: the Chinese institution is required to employ native speakers and, as has already been discussed, they usually teach oral skills. Thai1f’s dean also believed in the advantages of employing native speakers:

Because I think my dean wants native speakers to teach in our university and he wants students to learn to communicate with the native speaker, from, erm, somebody who speaks their own language. (Thai1f)

Regarding qualifications of foreign staff, there are also comparisons to be drawn between Thailand and China:

Chin1f. Yes – Chin2f. Usually they have degrees

Chin1f. University education. M

Chin2f. But not language or literature (Chin1f. Or linguistics) agriculture or something. And biochemistry, something like that ... Sometimes our department hires overseas students because it's really difficult to find qualified foreign teachers. (Chin1f & Chin2f).

Thus often, in China, the demand outweighs the supply and as a consequence, any native speaker can be hired, regardless of qualifications. The situation is similar in Thailand:

I think from my experience with native speakers, what can I say ... when people in Thailand recruit native speakers, they require only native speaker to speak English. (Thai1f)

There is no insistence on qualifications in English teaching only on speaking; teachers may be graduates but not always in an appropriate discipline, as was the case with an employee in Thailand who 'had to teach literature but he didn't know anything about literature because he had a degree in science.' (Thai1f)

The image of the superior 'native speaker' teacher has taken a severe battering in some of these anecdotes. While they should not be seen as typical illustrations of foreign teachers' knowledge and behaviour, they may be useful in signalling the range of impressions created in contexts which are unfamiliar to teachers from other backgrounds but in which nonetheless there are defined expectations and established codes of behaviour. They also reveal that the role of the 'native speaker' teacher is more complex than the native/non-native dichotomy allows room for. The fact of demand outstripping supply could be detrimental to the reputation of the 'native speaker' foreigner with the employment of unqualified teachers serving to tarnish their professional image.

Overall, however, the data shows that there are complementary roles for local and foreign teachers which work advantageously in most contexts (cf. Medgyes, 1992). Interacting with foreign teachers increases student confidence as oral communication skills develop and cultural knowledge is extended when unfamiliar customs are explained, often by taking language beyond its dictionary meaning into the realm of metaphor and idiom, as in the recalled example of 'salad dressing'. There is a willingness to welcome foreign staff, but within defined cultural and

institutional boundaries, which require understanding from both ‘locals’ and ‘foreigners’ for successful professional interaction.

7.5. Perceptions of issues pertaining to teacher training and professional development

Some participants have considerable experience training teachers in their institutions and most have undertaken some form of professional development. Many commented on how they were influenced by past teachers, both local and foreign, in the development of their own methodologies and approaches. The two major issues commented on were firstly, lack of English knowledge and teaching qualifications among trainees and secondly, lack of personal confidence. In this section, I will report on participants’ comments about these issues in their contexts, together with their recommendations. Once again, ownership of the profession is displayed through awareness of the range of obstacles besetting teachers in known contexts.

7.5.1. Problems with recruiting and training teachers: an example from the Philippines

A major local concern for Phil1f is what she perceives as the deteriorating quality of teaching applicants, due to the attraction of other professions which require good English skills and enable students to study abroad:

Well the teacher trainees – that’s the problem that we have right now because more and more Filipinos prefer to take courses like nursing because this will allow them to go abroad – so what they do with these courses, they set a very high standard so English has to be very good to get into these courses so you know, the problem right now is the students who go to the teacher education institutions are the ones who are not – you know – the more intellectually – so – and there are no scholarships for teacher education – for becoming a teacher so we end up – especially in the B. Ed - we end up with students who are themselves struggling in the language and it’s a challenge because they also have to learn how to teach English ... for example in the interactive English and there’s a debate about that – I don’t think there’s a clear solution (Phil1f)

Thus with other professions offering greater enticements than English teaching, the English levels of students on B.Ed programs are far below what is needed to even begin training as an English teacher. Consequently, most of the teaching time is taken up with improving English skills:

And so when we look at the curriculum – and this is the debate here - we have these classes for example so when we look at interactive English – and the rationale is we

give them grammar, we give them a combination of speaking listening but see that's in the document but if you talk to teachers you have the interactive English for example which is supposed to be a combination but many teachers focus on grammar because they feel like – because the students still need to improve their own English they need to help them develop their skills so in reality there's not much focus on how they're going to teach English as a second language (yeah, the language skills aren't there) yeah that's the thing and it takes some time – it really is a challenge and um, to me that's still a struggle until now – and that's the main reason why I'm interested in the research (Phil1f)

However, if too much time is spent on building up English skills, students miss out on the skills needed to pass the all-important professional examination:

How do we actually address this – do we help them develop the skills – do we actually try to do both or do we just set higher standards which is also hard – you know if you set very, very high standards no one will enrol in English education any more – nobody can get in. So you deal with those issues and there are ...yeah – that's why a lot of them fail because we have license for examination for teachers- that's another issue – so if you don't pass that, you can't be a professional teacher. And that's the problem because a lot of them fail according to statistics because the test is in English. (Phil1f)

It is evident that Phil1f and her colleagues are grappling with problems for which there is no easy solution: teaching English and teaching methodology within a limited timeframe without lowering standards. In this discussion she has illustrated a depth of concern and involvement which is unlikely to be found in outsiders who are not aware of the complete picture – of the fact that young Filipinos are opting for courses of study which will take them abroad, whereas no scholarships were being currently offered for teaching English. A high level of English, however, was still required for those undertaking teaching examinations.

7.5.2. Lack of confidence and self-marginalization

Lack of belief in their own capabilities, or what has been termed 'self-marginalization' (Kumaravadivelu, 2006b) is also seen by Viet1m in influencing teachers' attitudes:

... many of - all the language teaching methods or approaches – we borrowed, or we imported from the outside, but they do not see the important points that all these methods have been adopted and adapted into the context that they work in and they do not see what they have done, the effort they have put in, to make these approaches and the methods work in their context. They still think 'OK, these are the things we borrow from the others and what they say is always correct' so they do not see their strengths (Viet1m)

From these observations it appears that Viet1m sees Vietnamese teachers to be lacking in confidence because they do not value their own efforts in adapting and applying new methods.

Viet1m, as mentioned previously, has made considerable efforts to encourage trainee teachers in Vietnam to understand their local expertise and use it, rather than rely on what they have learnt from foreign sources:

In fact ... the only thing I have done when I carried out the PD professional development for secondary school teachers – I encouraged them to go from their context, their students, their environment, the facilities, the equipment that they have and they can see what is the best way the students can learn or they can develop their language ability. (Viet1m)

Encouragement of this kind will, it is contended, enhance the respect deserved for local knowledge by enabling teachers to see that the best influence on successful teaching derives from what they can see in their immediate environment.

As with Chinese and Vietnamese teachers who had scant opportunity to practise speaking, Thai5f found that local teachers frequently chose not to teach conversation, perhaps because, like the teachers described by Phil1f who preferred to teach grammar rather than CLT, they lacked confidence:

Um, according to the workload and many people say they don't like to teach conversation or oral English for some reason and then another reason may be they're not confident, they don't feel confident to teach I suppose. (Thai5f)

Reasons for these feelings of discomfort may be seen to include what has been already mentioned, namely the inadequate exposure to oral English, leaving teachers feeling ill at ease with a 'communicative' approach, but happy with a grammar-focused approach, which does not, in their perception, require unfamiliar methodology. Similar attitudes among teachers are recorded by Phil1f, who refers to a 'teacher-centred' approach with a strong focus on grammar:

... but some teachers that I know are still very much teacher- centred so if it's an English course they interact in English or English 101 it's still mainly the teacher

explaining and it's still very much worksheets – fill in the blanks, work on the errors (yes) put in the correct verb (Phil1f)

Concerns can be seen to be still very much related to the teaching of oral skills and hence to CLT, with the most urgent needs for teachers being adequate exposure to spoken English in order to build confidence. In the Philippines low proficiency in English is also an issue. Students are not encouraged to enter the profession, as greater rewards are available elsewhere, this factor may well prove to be prevalent globally, thus indicating the global nature of local issues.

7.5.3 Advantages of bilingualism

Participants were often able to refer to the value of knowing other languages when teaching English. Viet1m, above, referred to the differences between English and Vietnamese when coming to grips with academic writing while Chin1f perceived a definite advantage in being bilingual:

But for us I like to think that we find many interesting and funny sentences that are totally not English in the students' writing, but we understand! Because we come from the same first language and so it is easy to read it (and that is the advantage) if I translate word for word in Chinese. (Chin1f)

Consequently, it becomes easier to pinpoint the linguistic differences more effectively.

I guess the first lesson that I learned about students errors especially about the Chinese students' errors in English is that you learn to appreciate it [having a common first language]. ... I understand why they make these mistakes because I know in Chinese language we don't have a very strict tense system, we don't have a very comprehensive attributive clause system, quite a lot is missing in Chinese so I understand why they make these mistakes. (Chin1f)

Likewise, as a speaker of English and Tamil, Sing1f had developed strong views on the importance of bilingual teachers, implying that they would have a clearer understanding of the language learning process:

I strongly believe that if you want to teach English as a 2nd language get a person who's bilingual to do it Don't use a monolingual person to teach English as a foreign or a second language because I don't think they'll be able to empathise with the speakers as much as a bilingual or multilingual learner would. (Sing1f)

She develops her argument along a more abstract trajectory than Chin1f. Instead of considering the linguistic advantages in detail, she draws on Singapore's colonial past with warlike metaphors of 'plundering' and 'conquering' to show how imperialist designs may be achieved through language:

What do you want to do, do you want to save the world or do you just want to conquer the world? That's what the question is, isn't it? Because if you want to save the world, then learn a second language before you go out to save the world but if your aim is not to save the world but to conquer the world and plunder, like you know our predecessors you don't need another language you just use the lingua franca of the world ... I think a minority of people consider themselves monolingual in today's climate. I think a lot more people are beginning to learn a second language. (Sing1f)

Sing1f's formulation of the question of 'saving the world or conquering the world' embodies a significant allusion to her country's colonial past as for her, the notion of 'conquering the world' accompanied the aim of plundering 'like our predecessors' who did not need another language to achieve their goals. 'Saving the world' suggests a more peaceful aim and requires learning another language for more balanced and equitable interaction. The contrast between 'saving the world' and 'conquering the world', furthermore, adds a postcolonial filter to a number of currently important concepts dominating English language learning. Linguistic imperialism (cf. Phillipson, 1992, discussed in Chapter 3) is alluded to here as 'conquering the world' without taking the trouble to learn another language but using the 'lingua franca' of English to ride roughshod over other languages. On the other hand, 'saving the world' implies a more beneficent approach of taking the trouble to learn another language, as in fact most people today are doing, monolingualism being an acknowledged minority state (cf. Canagarajah, 2009).

Viewing bilingualism in these ways strengthens the position of the multilingual teacher firstly, by reinforcing awareness of enhanced linguistic knowledge which learners can draw on through comparing and contrasting the diverse systems at their disposal, and secondly, through the

implication that imperialistic attitudes may be minimised by individuals making the effort to learn other languages than the dominant one, as suggested by Sing1f.

The attitudes and opinions expressed in this section about language teachers' knowledge provide a powerful argument for accepting local knowledge as integral to developing sound professional practice. The description of problems recruiting teachers in the Philippines illustrate the close involvement of local staff with local issues, and an equally close understanding of the feelings and beliefs of local teachers is evidenced by the analysis of their lack of confidence by Viet1m and by Thai5f in Vietnam and Thailand respectively. Opinions about bilingualism also indicate the benefits of local experience and understanding and recognize the value of linguistic knowledge, considered an important aspect of teacher cognition (Borg, 2003).

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed participants' beliefs and concerns about their profession in their contexts. By recalling their own reasons for choosing to become English teachers, they have revealed important knowledge of local circumstances which impacts on the development of professional skills. Additionally, the evolution of a strong professional identity has been mapped as participants describe the influences of family, teachers and cultural traditions. Enthusiasm for English, seemingly detached from political considerations, also featured as a dominant motivating force.

The strengths of having a profound understanding of the local environment are manifested through what participants have disclosed about the strategies they have developed for managing local issues. Developing appropriate teaching strategies and attitudes has in most cases depended on understanding of a society's political, cultural and historical past, as in the case of colonialism. Participants have built on this knowledge in order to make sense of current changes and to measure what new influences need to be taken into account. Hence the adaptation of concepts such as CLT can more accurately reflect the country's educational needs.

Perceptions of foreign teachers are enlighteningly viewed from another angle, from that of the host country, enabling a more balanced interpretation of how local and foreign English teachers can profitably work together. Likewise, there are views of foreign students, as in the example of those studying in China, which show awareness of diverse learning styles and an ability to cross educational cultures so that student expectations can be met.

Considerations of history and culture, alongside existing educational policies, are shown to add weight to recommendations regarding teacher education, important for evaluating the use of concepts such as CLT in diverse environments. Participants are able to clarify that it is not only the students who may have difficulty with such concepts; teachers, too, may have been educated in a context which does not allow imported notions to be readily transferable. The dominant concern about the training of English teachers is the lack of exposure to English and hence the difficulty of ensuring a level of proficiency at which teacher training can begin. These concerns loom large for those living in countries where there is limited access to English and are reiterated throughout the data. Finally, although the need for appropriate materials and methods is not denied, there is an underlying sense that what is crucial is the importance of building confidence among aspiring multilingual teachers of English.

CHAPTER 8 ADDITIONAL ISSUES ARISING IN THE DATA: SUPPORT FROM THE LITERATURE

8.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses major topics emerging in the data by summarising the most relevant published research. The earlier literature review chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) dealt with the broader topics surrounding the research but it is now important to consider issues which I see as subsumed under the sweeping themes of Globalisation, Culture, Identity and Methodology and which were raised by participants frequently enough to deserve further exploration. Aspects of learning, using and teaching English reported on in the data will be supported by a consideration of how they are viewed by others in the field, with the aim of establishing the knowledge base necessary to the summary of my findings in Chapter 9.

The topics which arose most frequently in the data, either because they aroused the concern of participants or because they constituted meaningful memories of individual professional development, can be grouped under three major headings. Firstly, individual and professional development was considered, including early memories of learning, teaching methods and content. Secondly, participants' descriptions of their teaching contexts embraced changing approaches to ELT globally, with regard to, in particular, definitions of CLT, the place of grammar and the selection of materials appropriate to particular contexts and cultures. Thirdly, the place, or role of English involved considering the impact of English use on diverse societies.

8.2. Prior learning and cognition

Early memories of learning English are an obvious starting point for an introduction to multilingual teacher identity. Published reflections resemble those of my participants, as in these from Braine:

I began learning English at the age of 13, anticipating my English studies with both enthusiasm and trepidation. I was fearful because I had heard from other students how difficult the subject was, but excited due to the high ambitions I held for mastering the language. I was elated when I was introduced to the English alphabet on the first day of class, and went home proud that I could recite some English letters. (2005: 130)

All of the emotions described here - fear, excitement, elation – are also apparent in the anecdotes from my participants. They seem to have been the starting point for a career constructed around English language. Moreover, they provide a positive, affective environment for the dimension of ‘prior language learning experience’ which Borg has considered important for evaluating the strengths of multilingual teachers:

Teachers’ prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualizations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives. (2003: 88)

The significance of language learning experiences was further investigated by Ellis (2006: 8), whose research provided evidence that ‘experiential knowledge formed by different kinds of L2 learning ... forms a powerful resource underpinning ESL teachers’ professional knowledge and beliefs about language teaching’ (2006). After interviewing teachers of adult ESL students in Australia, who themselves had experience of learning other languages, Ellis found that a variety of insights into learning and communication strategies were displayed. Among them could be discerned an empathy with one individual’s learners:

‘...the fact that Mum and Dad were (long pause) wogs when we were young, and had heavy accents, and were laughed at by the Australians. I guess it makes me very sympathetic and patient...’ (2006: 2).

As a teacher of newly arrived migrants, this interviewee was able to bring her own experience to bear on her classroom approach. Nonetheless, this kind of experiential knowledge is not highly valued, claims Ellis, as part of what teachers should know. Her findings led her to recommend further investigation of the role of learning additional languages on teacher cognition: ‘It is time we also recognised the subtle interplay of experiential knowledge with received knowledge, and began to investigate further how teachers’ successful language learning can contribute to their students’ learning’ (ibid).

The multilingual teachers in my study possess this feature of cognition, as shown in their testimony. The recognition that experiential knowledge of language learning is important validates this particular strength which by definition belongs to all multilingual teachers. Just as Ellis's teachers were able to use their knowledge to illustrate their superiority over the one monolingual teacher in the research, so the teachers in my study have been able to show an enhanced understanding of the language learning experience which goes beyond what can be taught on a course. One example is the depth added by Vietlm's description of the croaking of frogs in a passage to be translated (Chapter 7); others involve appreciating gaps in cultural knowledge, as with Indilf's reference to Somerset Maugham and smoked salmon (Chapter 5).

Additional surrounding factors, including aspects of the affective domain, are referred to by Hayes, who, in his study of a Thai teacher, has uncovered the same levels of enthusiasm and dedication expressed by my participants. His narrative study of 'Sudarat' highlights the range of influences brought to bear on teachers' lives, and suggests similarities that may operate worldwide. It also reinforces the notion of a thread running through my participants' narratives showing how enthusiasm for learning began in childhood:

This predisposition to learning, combined with her willingness to work in partnership with students to further their learning has made Sudarat a valuable teacher in her institution, one who has had the capacity to promote change in others in spite of what seem to have been inauspicious, difficult beginnings. Her experiences as a teacher over the years have enabled her to rediscover the joy in learning that she herself experienced as a student and which she lost for some years as a result of her mother taking control over her career choice. (Hayes, 2009: 95)

The narrative approach taken by Hayes embraces aspects of 'Sudarat's' life which go beyond the professional but which enhance understanding of the influences contributing to professional identity, in this case family, in much the same way as my participants refer to family background as motivating their career choice. Such an approach was acknowledged by Mann (2005: 110) as valuable for a number of reasons, including constructing professional identity.

8.3. Pedagogic cultures

Participants spoke at length about their teaching approaches, sometimes linked to prior learning experiences. The most frequently occurring themes can be divided into content, especially

literature and imported teaching materials, and method, involving grammar, memorisation and CLT. The dominance of CLT leads to it occupying a separate section in this chapter, following the other, generally less complex, pedagogic topics.

8.3.1. The example of memorisation

Numerous studies have been published about teaching approaches around the world. Studies by Cortazzi and Jin (1996), and Flowerdew and Miller (1995), discussed in McKay (2002) contrast different learning cultures, for example, China, Japan and western countries. McKay points out that the danger of such generalized approaches to describing different learning cultures lies in their promotion of stereotypes and their presentation of Asian cultures as ‘lagging behind western cultures’ and that the comparison of various non-western cultures with western ones suggests that in some ways the latter are the standard and hence should provide the model for the teaching of English’ (2002: 107). I have used China as a major example to illustrate different learning styles because research by Chinese academics parallels the comments of my Chinese participants. For many Chinese students, memorisation and recitation, although much denigrated by CLT proponents (McKay, 2002, see below) were important. A trenchant rebuttal to western attitudes has been issued by Du:

Over-generalised as it is, memorisation is an important learning skill for Chinese learners. Talented students in China usually have powerful memories. Western teachers sometimes respond to memorisation by Chinese students with derision and scorn. Sampson (1984) argues that such a response is not a mark of advanced scientific thinking and westerners need to reflect carefully on this matter and ask why there is apparently nothing worth memorising in western society today. (Du, 2005: 95)

Western opinions about memorisation appear to follow a stereotypical trend which is exposed as lacking substance when one listens to competent teachers who admit to having been set memorisation tasks in their schooldays. By meeting people who have been through this process one can begin to review such stereotyped notions.

Chinese learning styles were researched by Cortazzi and Jin in 1996 in an oft-quoted article which reported student views:

When we turn to the students' views in the present data, we find that many of the Chinese learners who have experienced a Western culture of learning by having Western teachers believe that they could have the best of both cultures: 'We should absorb some fresh elements from Western ways of teaching to adjust to Chinese ways of learning. 'Western' ways of teaching and studying and Chinese ways of learning belong to different systems and are formed by different cultural backgrounds. Chinese students should learn from Western ways to develop their skills and abilities. 'Each nation has its own culture so the learning and teaching process is different between different countries. I think foreign teaching methods plus Chinese learning processes may be of some good to the students' (1996: 202)

The students in this study were well aware of diverse cultural and transglobal flows. They seemed to understand that it was not necessary to relinquish their own culture in order to take on aspects of another. It follows that teachers who have experienced a different learning culture in their own education are in the same position: they can choose what will work best because they have at least two cultures to draw on. There is therefore no need to reject wholesale skills such as memorisation, particularly as, for some of my participants, memorisation played a role in their success. These comments are supported by studies of overseas postgraduate students in English speaking countries, for example, Australia. Regarding study abroad experiences there, Zeegers and Barron point out that

... there are practices in place that perpetuate a dualistic construction of western and non-western modes of thought. Such practices are underpinned by discourses that construct non-western higher research degree students as lacking in the important academic skills required of what is, in western terms, a proper academic. (2008: 70)

The contrast to be made here is between two approaches. On the one hand, students surveyed by Cortazzi and Jin were in favour of learning from two cultures, while, on the other hand, Zeegers and Barron suggest that there are institutions which not only separate west and non-west, but which do so in such a way as to belittle non-western thinking. Remarkably, there seems to be an openness on the part of Cortazzi and Jin's Chinese students which is not necessarily adopted by institutions wanting to attract similar students. Zeegers and Barron suggest that dividing cultures of learning into 'western' and non-western' indicates a preference for western thinking similar to that described by McKay (2002). The Chinese students, on the other hand, perceived benefits in learning styles on both sides of the divide.

8.3.2 Literature as an example

The use of literature for language teaching has given rise to a great deal of debate, perhaps best summarised by Widdowson's tongue-in-cheek appraisal:

As far as English language teaching is concerned, literature has over recent years been generally purged from the programme, together with other undesirable elements like grammar and translation, on the grounds that it makes no contribution to the purpose or the process of learning the language for practical use. It is supposed that people do not usually learn English these days for cultural enrichment, as a means of access to the aesthetics of verbal art; that such a purpose belongs to a more elite and leisured age, which could afford to be less concerned with the exigencies of practical need. (1985: 180)

Also worthy of note here is Widdowson's allusion to the 'purging' of grammar and translation, as these activities have loomed large in the data, both in recounts of learning experiences and of teaching methods. To return to literature, Widdowson has expressed elsewhere a succinct justification for its inclusion in language courses and his words are quoted as a chapter heading by Kramsch:

We read on, caught up in the discourse, involved in creating a world with language, and learning language at the same time as we use it in the realization of another reality. Far from being diminished, human experience is extended. (Widdowson, 1981:213 cited in Kramsch, 1993: 130)

This experience has been documented in the past in discussions of how to teach literature and culture, for example by Harrison (1990). Referring to Southern Africa, he observes:

I would not necessarily argue for African writers in Africa merely on grounds of surface political and sociological relevance but I do not think these factors should be neglected either. ... One of the principles of text selection could be worlds cohering rather than worlds missing each other by several light years, whatever the purely literary merits of the texts involved. (1990: 49)

To summarise, then, although not living in the 'leisured age' envisaged by Widdowson, and even though they are faced with 'the exigencies of practical need', many learners still manage to derive pleasure from literature, whether from the formal teaching described here or, as in the case of Singl'm and Phil'l, simply enjoying reading. Recalling Indilf's experience with Somerset Maugham, the need for worlds to cohere, as recommended by Harrison would also seem to be essential, before human experience can be extended, as Widdowson envisaged. In

addition, for Sing1f, extolling the strengths of African writers, there was an appreciation of literature in English showing the ‘extension of human experience’ beyond national borders, (see Chapter 6).

8.3.3 Evaluating materials

Knowledge of their teaching environments was revealed in the data to contribute to the evaluation of teaching materials (Phil1f, Viet1m), a topic which has provoked significant controversy. Accusations of linguistic and cultural imperialism, in addition to colonialism, have long been leveled at this activity (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1994). Gray has recently summarized the dangers of ‘cultural artefacts’ produced for English teaching globally (2010). He refers to Leung (2005), where the author criticizes textbooks for their ‘partial representations of social reality’ (2005: 137, cited in Gray, 2010: 716). After describing the world portrayed in some of the most ‘iconic’ English language textbooks, Gray comments that little is yet known about their impact on students. He cites from his research on teachers, who appear to have strong backgrounds in British cultural traditions. Gray’s survey of teachers in the UK shows a particular set of preoccupations with teachers expressing discomfort with values that they do not necessarily share:

Research into teachers’ thinking, on the other hand, suggests that many teachers are indeed aware of the ideological dimension of much global textbook content and that some find the uncritical celebration of the lives of philanthropic capitalists and new capitalist values problematic (Gray 2002; 2010). As one teacher put it, ‘there is no criticism [. . .] no questioning [. . .] no discussion or anything, whether this is like morally right or not’ (Gray 2010: 157). Rather, another said, global textbooks engage in ‘glorifying a kind of middleclass’ for its eccentric individualism and conspicuous wealth which he felt ‘might be considered shallow’ in certain educational settings (ibid: 156). (Gray, 2010: 730).

These comments from Gray’s participants represent the views of ‘native speaker’ teachers who have ideological backgrounds familiar to many in the field. The final comment, expressing doubt about how textbook middle class values might appear in ‘certain educational settings’ reveals this background, which can be contrasted with the views of teachers who belong to the settings referred to. A balanced critique of these textbooks would include comments from multilingual teachers.

‘As with all cultural artefacts, textbooks are products of the cultures which produce them—in this case the commercial culture of a powerful global industry’ (Gray, *ibid*: 730). Greater emphasis on local needs and a concomitant encouragement to local teachers, means that the ‘commercial culture’ may not continue to suffice. Improved educational facilities in countries like the Philippines will permit teachers to voice more strongly their dissatisfaction with imported textbooks, as the comments from Phil1f in Chapter 7 have indicated. Research from Singapore shows that teachers in that country have recognised the inappropriacy of materials from elsewhere. Silver summarises the local situation as follows, reflecting observations in the data by Sing1f and Sing2m:

First, Singapore has a long standing bilingual educational policy for all state-supported schools. ... Second, teachers are concerned with effectively implementing a national English language arts curriculum which culminates in high-stakes national testing for all students. Third, there is linguistic diversity in the student population, home–school language differences for many students and prevalent home use of a localized variety of English (Singlish) which is considered to be nonstandard and inappropriate for educational and professional purposes (Silver, 2009: 334).

Silver goes on to make an important point in her conclusion about the relevance of TESOL in a globalized world, when many people consider multilingualism to be the way forward:

... another part of the relevance issue is the fundamental question of who we are and what goal we want our students to attain: English competence or multilingual competence? For many teachers and students, multilingual competence is of paramount importance in a globalized world. (*ibid*)

This insistence on the importance of clarifying whether the aim is for students to be multilingual or to be English speakers is a distinction which has not been widely recognised, although it can be seen to be crucial in a number of cases, for as Silver remarks, Singapore is not unique in having a multilingual population. With the aim of multilingualism, the place of English would need redefinition and certainly textbooks would need to reflect this new position. The notion of plurilingualism perhaps takes understanding of Silver’s comments further, as this term stresses the different roles of languages within a multilingual framework (cf. Chapter 3) rather than seeing English in isolation.

These comments by researchers show voices from a number of contexts expressing doubts about globally produced materials. UK English teachers in Gray's (2010) survey feel a degree of embarrassment about the conspicuous materialism idealised in many course books, while teachers in Singapore are doubtful about both cultural appropriacy and lack of awareness of government policies. Recent attitudes have been summarised by Block:

There seemed to be an implicit hyperglobalism which envisaged the entire world learning English via one dominant methodology, and one particular type of pedagogical material. However, it was again the work of authors such as Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) which persuaded many ELT professionals to consider the social, political and economic factors which come into play when methods and materials cross borders. The result has been that in recent years there is an altogether more reflective and nuanced approach to language teaching methods and their transferability around the world ... (2004: 76)

This 'reflective and nuanced approach' would need to embrace the views of ELT professionals in many locations. Gray's survey has presented the views of teachers in the UK but their concerns are not the same as those of my participants. The UK teachers express doubts about the materialistic ideologies conveyed by some materials but teachers in, for example, China or the Philippines are more concerned about the imposition of foreign ideas which present inappropriate attitudes to local traditions or religious beliefs.

8.4. Reviewing CLT

CLT has been shown to be a strong theme throughout this study for a variety of reasons. It could have been discussed under 'Pedagogic cultures' in the previous section but because it arose frequently in the data, I have accorded it an additional section. I included it in Chapter 3 because I saw it as being strongly influenced by the broad sweep of current developments in approaches to Globalisation and Culture. In this chapter it is relevant to pick up the threads running through the data, with a focus on research describing individual teachers' views about CLT. Most participants were keen to embrace a 'communicative' teaching approach but some, perhaps because they were newer to the profession, were not entirely clear about what this entailed. Ideas ranged from 'keep them busy' (Chin1f, Chapter 7) to 'Besides linguistic competence there

are also some other competences for example sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence' (Chin4m, Chapter 7). Participants with responsibility for teacher training (Chin1m, Phillf and Viet1m) noted that teachers often found CLT difficult to implement. McKay corroborates their opinions, especially Chin4m's, with reference to a report on CLT in China, which found that 'The Chinese teachers in the study believed that whereas CLT would be appropriate for Chinese students who intended to go to English-speaking countries, an emphasis on reading and translation would best meet the needs of many English language learners in China' (2002: 113). Alptekin (2010: 104) shares this opinion. Furthermore, McKay explains the reluctance to use CLT as being due to 'the marginalisation of bilingual teachers of English, who are placed in a position where they are often asked to use materials containing cultural information with which they are not familiar' (ibid). According to Phillf, this 'cultural information' may also be inappropriate, (see discussion on materials, below).

8.4.1 CLT and the individual teacher

In addition to the exterior difficulties of implementing CLT in contexts which it was not originally designed for, the methodology can be stressful for teachers who question it, not only because they feel inadequate to teach the skills required by the 'weak' approach but also because they doubt its effectiveness. The Chinese government's official approval of CLT has put pressure on Chinese academics, as demonstrated in Tsui's narrative study of Minfang (2007). In Minfang's stories it is not English language which is at issue, it is the attitudes towards the teaching of English displayed by Minfang's colleagues and how he is influenced by them. In her study, Tsui has taken CLT away from its Western origins and explored its transfer to a Chinese context. Proficiency in English and proficiency in Cantonese seem to have been the two equally important pre-requisites for success for Minfang when he entered university. The next step entailed acceptance of CLT, for which Minfang felt repugnance, having a strong belief in 'traditional' methods.

He described the teaching style as "soft and unrealistic" and was sceptical about the basic assumptions of CLT. It was "soft" because the linguistic points were not made entirely explicit in the communicative activities.

Students could finish a host of activities without knowing how these activities were related to the language system and what was learned. It was "unrealistic" because it required the teacher to have pragmatic competence. Minfang pointed out that most of

his teachers had never interacted with native speakers of English, had never gone overseas, and had never found themselves in a situation where they had to use English for daily interaction. It was therefore unrealistic to expect them to evaluate the appropriateness of utterances and communication strategies. Moreover, he felt that these activities carried underlying cultural assumptions which required students to assume different personae if they were to participate fully. For example, instantaneous oral participation in class required students to express opinions spontaneously without careful thinking. (2007: 664)

Whether or not one agrees with Minfang's reasoned critique, it exhibits a deeply-felt antagonism towards CLT which is partly cultural and personal and partly based on logical reasoning. Logically, it seemed unrealistic to expect teachers who had never used English with 'native speakers' to teach students how to do so while culturally, the method contradicted Chinese tradition, which does not favour spontaneous speech in the classroom. On a personal level, Minfang's own background and beliefs seem to have made it hard for him to respond positively to CLT. This combination of factors was unique to Minfang but the inflexibility of his institution made it impossible for him to voice his disagreement. The dilemma in this scenario seems to lie in the imposition of a foreign method on an institution whose employees are given no choice. The favour accorded to the foreign methodology represents a kind of officially sanctioned cultural cringe which overrides local beliefs. In addition, the situation is made more complex by Minfang's own experience and attitudes, which are given no space and create great personal conflict. Some of these issues, then, relate to professional identity, which is a strong theme in Tsui's article. Her research is also an important illustration of a teaching issue being dealt with on a personal, individual level. I have included it here to balance the exterior, institutional perceptions of teaching issues with the interior, personal struggles and reflections that characterise all truly professional endeavours. My data also contains reflections by multilingual teachers on methodologies available to them. Their comments contribute to an understanding of individual reactions to particular educational and cultural contexts.

For present purposes, it is also relevant to note, along with McKay, that:

Unfortunately, a discourse of otherness in which particular cultures of learning, particularly non-western ones, are depicted as less productive than western ones underlies much of the discussion of CLT. In these discussions, CLT is often viewed

as the ideal methodology for English language teaching; at the same time, some argue that CLT, while the most productive approach, is not feasible in many countries because the local culture of learning tends to promote mechanical learning and a lack of individualism and creative thinking. (McKay, 2002: 107)

Issues around the interpretation of CLT, as the data has revealed, have involved opposing the ‘local culture’ to CLT particularly regarding the need to teach grammar. The significance of this opposition of grammar and CLT, which emerged strongly in the data, will be discussed further in the findings.

8.5. The place occupied by English in multilingual societies

The growing awareness of plurilingualism (cf. Canagarajah 2009, discussed in Chapter 3) has directed the spotlight to the place of English in societies where it is not the first language, increasing the need for English teachers to define how English is used. A number of writers have analysed the place of English in various parts of the world. Below, I consider research on the place of English in Thailand, China, Hong Kong and Singapore as these examples parallel most closely the experiences of my participants. In this section, as elsewhere in this study, by ‘place of English’ I mean the role of English in society and the uses to which it is put alongside other languages in that society. This role may include communication with foreigners, a subject for study, or use in the workplace.

8.5.1. Example 1: as a foreign language in Thailand

A comparison can also be sketched between the place of English as an academic subject in non-English speaking countries and the place of other languages in English speaking countries. Such an emphasis is illuminating because it enables professionals from English-speaking countries to understand better what may be described as the ‘foreignness’ of English. In a study investigating Thai teachers’ use of two languages, English and Thai, in the classroom, Forman (2005) overturned the assumption that ‘students wish to enter into the target culture and to work towards native speaker competence’ (viii) finding that ‘Thai EFL is quite distinct from the ESL domain in which it is usually subsumed and that on the contrary, it is strongly affiliated with Foreign Language teaching (FLT) in almost every feature of curriculum, methodology, student participation and teacher bilinguality’. (ibid) Forman’s study, based on classroom observation,

adds another dimension to my participants' portrayal of English use in their countries. The lack of opportunity to use the language puts it on the same level with foreign languages taught in my own context, Australia and there appear to be strong parallels in the motivation to learn, as well as, according to Forman, the teaching methodology adopted.

8.5.2 Example 2: concerns in China

China's immense size and population has resulted in a proliferation of studies expressing opinions about where English should belong and how it should be used. One such opinion comes from Du, who has delineated clear-cut roles for Chinese and English:

In the age of the globalisation of the English language, while the Chinese language can make Chinese culture brighter, the English language can help China develop faster. (ibid: 101)

A clear distinction has been drawn by Du between the purposes of Chinese and English, the former for culture and the latter for development, involving as it does relations with the outside world.

Other writers have expressed concern about the spread of English in China:

Despite the rapid increase of English use in Chinese society in general and the popularity of English language education, tensions remain high between the spread of English and the national language, Mandarin Chinese, for the majority of the country, and between the minority home language, Mandarin Chinese as a second language and English as a third language in the case of a typical minority group. (Feng, 2009: 85)

In this article, Feng goes on to describe the cultural and linguistic tensions surrounding the use of English, described by some as a 'double-edged sword' (2009: 90). This research is also valuable because it describes a range of language combinations which situate English in non-dominant positions according to existing languages and their roles. In addition, concerns are raised about social stratification and inequality as a result of inappropriate language policies. The high status

of English is seen by some as a threat to local languages but due to the range of conditions operating in China, it is difficult to apply a single, uniform policy.

8.5.3 Example 3: from Singapore

Official attempts to assign a place to English have been discussed by my participants and further documented in the literature. Singapore is one example of a country which has addressed multilingualism. Both my Singaporean participants alluded to their country's multicultural policy, which has been analysed by Lim (2009). She warns that

... the government's attempt to assign a multilingual repertoire of their choosing to the population, via language policies and language campaigns, can lead to what may be considered by some as success, but success that is skin deep. The power of a multilingual ecology is too great to be constrained by directives, and certainly too diverse and dynamic to be contained in two official standard languages of English and Mandarin (2009: 66)

Lim contends that 'Singlish' (Singaporean English) and the Chinese dialects are a stronger expression of Singaporean roots than the 'official' languages and recommends that language policy should 'create a space for these linguistic varieties'. Her discussion reveals the complexity of multilingual societies in that she has added another tier to the varieties already acknowledged without taking into account other mother tongues such as Malay and Tamil (spoken by my participants). She recommends taking steps to reduce the 'fear and loathing' felt by some for the mother tongues of many of the population – a feeling which possibly lies behind the desire of some inhabitants to emigrate rather than have their children schooled in their mother tongues, as recalled by Sing2m.

8.5.4 Example 4: the view from Hong Kong

Another example from another multilingual society is provided by Li, writing about 'biliteracy and trilingualism' in the Hong Kong education system (2009). Li compares the role of English and Mandarin (Putonghua) to show how Mandarin has attained a position similar to that of other languages taught internationally through the agency of the Confucius Institute, which he claims is 'comparable in mission and objectives to other more established national counterparts like the British Council, Alliance Française, Goethe-Institut and Instituto Cervantes' (2009: 76). Moreover, in Hong Kong, as in Singapore, Mandarin, alongside English, is considered an important language for the global employment market. A further important reason for the teaching of Mandarin in Cantonese speaking Hong Kong is its symbolic value as China's

national language. There is a complication, however, in the preference of many Hong Kong parents for their children to be educated in English (Li, 2009: 79) to the extent that they will relocate to areas with English medium schools, just as the parents mentioned by Sing2m emigrate to have their children taught in English. Even with the ascendancy of Mandarin as described above, culturally and for economic reasons it is still difficult, claims Li, to find solutions to medium of instruction languages in Hong Kong. Awareness of problems such as these and the many social, cultural and political issues surrounding them is crucial for making enlightened decisions about language choices and once again, the importance of local knowledge is effectively underlined. There is a strong contrast to be made with the concerns of Feng (2009) which show how markedly needs and preferences vary across China. Hong Kong, with its own unique historical background, is in a different position to the rest of the country, with its 'open door' policy (Feng, 2009: 86) and doubts about English do not appear to be as deeply felt in the former British territory. All of the above writers, however, succeed in reinforcing awareness of the multiplicity of languages that exist already in their countries, in comparison with which English is an outsider, as it is for my participants.

The message carried by all these examples involves understanding particular local attitudes and conditions. On the one hand, there are questions of equity which highlight denial of opportunity to those without access to English. On the other hand, awareness of cultural and linguistic rights is needed to enable English users to achieve the right balance of language skills for their own success. Participants who have commented on the 'interior' effects of English use, regarding identity and feelings of linguistic deprivation, are well placed to deal with these issues for their students. In addition, their descriptions of their own situations and the impact of particular circumstances on their use of English is corroborated by published research concerning what I have described as 'exterior' contextual effects of English use.

There is a great deal of concern over lack of opportunities for students to practise English (cf. Chin4m, Viet1m, Phil1f) with many attempts described to overcome this difficulty but this concern is with material matters, such as resources, location, staff training, rather than individual lack of access to English. As previously mentioned, there is an enormous range of exposure to English – from every day in Singapore to almost zero in parts of China. The same concern is expressed elsewhere in the literature as illustrated in the comments by three researchers below

which highlight how professional perceptions vary globally. After Pakir's summary of concerns in South East Asia, opinions about conditions in 'resource poor' nations around the world and in China will be compared and contrasted.

The primary concerns of the 337 "English language scholars and researchers in SEAMEO countries" were: English for specific purposes (138), methodology (128), and instructional materials development (122). These concerns are heavily pedagogical in nature, focusing on efficiency in English language teaching and learning, (Pakir, 2010: 333)

This South East Asian region surveyed by Pakir exemplifies the profile supplied by many of my participants concerning the voicing of practical needs (cf. Indo1f, Phil1f) and the same needs are stated for China (Chin4m).

Speaking from a more generalized viewpoint, Bruthiaux has referred to similar conditions:

In developing, resource-poor societies especially, these conditions include not only the minimal presence of English beyond the classroom but also very large classes, teachers with minimal English proficiency or who cannot afford to travel abroad and thus sensitize themselves to life beyond their borders, limited contact time (often 3 hours per week or less), and an examination culture that favors memorisation over exploration (for illustrations from Thailand, see Forman, 2005). (Bruthiaux, 2010: 366)

Bruthiaux's summary lists the dominant issues faced by some of my participants and mentioned by most of them. The problems of CLT in China were outlined by Chin4m in the data and have been discussed above. They receive support from Hu, who listed the following contextual factors operating against CLT in China:

... a shortage of financial resources to support educational reform and innovations, scarcity of authentic language materials, a loss of qualified teachers to advantaged areas, teachers' lack of communicative competence in English, and of knowledge of English-speaking cultures, strong influences of the traditional Chinese culture of learning, little opportunity to use English for social and vocational purposes, a general lack of motivation to learn English among students, and examination pressures on classroom instruction. (Hu, 2005: 67)

Both Hu and Bruthiaux make similar observations about environments they have become familiar with, Hu regarding his own country and Bruthiaux referring to countries he has visited.

Large classes, unqualified teachers and the pressures of examination requirements are listed, with some mention of cultural difference impeding learning. Some of my participants, especially Thai2f, Chin4m and Phil1f, describe how these concerns are raised as objections to the implementation of CLT thus providing further evidence of the lack of clarity surrounding appropriate methods.

8.6. Context, culture and language in understanding English use

Participants' professional understanding is supported by the references discussed above with regard to the topics they raised in the data. Their particular strengths concerning their experiences and beliefs about their contexts and cultures, showing how the 'local' is becoming part of the 'global' are supported in an approach which derives inspiration from scholars as diverse as Canagarajah (2005) and Malinowski (cited in Martin, 2001). This approach, based on the tenets of Systemic Functional Linguistics (which also gives credence to my methodology) stresses the value of understanding the context and culture of a language teaching environment:

In summary, then, as Malinowski argued more than fifty years ago, you cannot understand a text unless you know something about the context in which it occurs. Because we are social animals, this context is a social one. It involves people doing things with their lives (field), interacting with other people (tenor), and making use of one or another channel of communication and abstraction (mode) to do so.
(Martin, 2001: 161)

The point to be made from this allusion to Systemic Functional Linguistics is that understanding culture is vital for understanding language. Teachers who belong to the culture in which the language is being taught therefore have an advantage over those who come from elsewhere, even if the language they teach is not their own. An understanding of culture would allow for the influence of more than one language on people's cultural contexts and this is a strong justification for the superiority of multilingual teachers. At the same time, a balance needs to be struck between the culture of the target language and the culture of the first language and this could involve the development of a new, third cultural space in which the salient features of both cultures are recognised and applied to the use of language. 'Third spaces' have been much discussed in applied linguistics, notably by Kramsch (1993) and Pennycook (2001a) who refers to Kramsch in asserting the need to think of 'what is produced in cultural encounters, not just

homogeneity or heterogeneity or imperialism or resistance, but rather what third cultures or third spaces are constantly being created' (2001a: 71). With support from my participants, I would like to introduce another 'third space' here. Whereas Kramsch highlights the 'third place' growing 'in the interstices between the cultures that the learner grew up with and the new cultures he or she is being introduced to' (1993: 236) my participants have provided evidence of the co-existence of cultures in a given context. In their case, the alien culture related to English has already been introduced but what is becoming more and more interesting is how it sits, according to their perceptions, with the culture of the local environment. They have defined a 'third place' into which they have allowed the presence of an alien culture, on their terms.

The above words from Kramsch, it is interesting to note, are also used by Holliday in his mention of 'third places' (2005b: 168) with an emphasis on students' social autonomy, which must develop independently of the teacher. Holliday goes on to warn against the 'binary native-non-native speaker division, which ... encourages a simplistic idea about one set of people being culturally the same and the other being culturally different (ibid). This 'simplistic idea' can be avoided by looking closely at how a group of highly literate multilingual individuals perceive themselves navigating confluences of cultural rivers. Because they are constantly using and adapting the alien language to their own environment, they do not make the distinction between binaries. In fact, the ever-present notion of context can be seen to link these ideas about culture to cognition. I have already described how teachers working in their own environments possess invaluable contextual knowledge. Borg has acknowledged this dimension:

Another central issue to emerge here is the role of context. Greater understandings of the contextual factors – e.g. institutional, social, instructional, physical – which shape what teachers do are central to deeper insights into relationships between cognition and practice. The study of cognition and practice without an awareness of the contexts in which these occur will inevitably provide partial, if not flawed, characterizations of teachers and teaching. (2003: 106)

Implicit here is further justification for developing an understanding of the different worlds inhabited by multilingual teachers. In the present study, the principal contextual factors explored are the social and physical as these are most relevant to participants' sociolinguistic backgrounds and can be described by them within a personal framework, whereas institutional and instructional factors require a greater degree of exterior referencing to local policies and

regulations. Consequently, they are not always within the control of the individual, although they may be broadly sketched to supply background information.

8.7. Conclusion

The theme of multilingualism traverses all these professional aspects of ELT. Each topic reinforces the value of a multilingual approach to language learning, using and teaching. Firstly the very activity of learning to speak another language has an acknowledged impact on teacher cognition. Inherent in this learning experience is the knowledge of the educational environment in which teaching takes place, allowing for an evaluation of a range of approaches. Then the knowledge of one's own context enriches understanding of the various tensions operating between English and the other languages used in a given context. Finally, knowledge of one's society, an important element of cultural and contextual knowledge, illuminates understanding of intercultural interaction. This examination of the wide range of qualities possessed by multilingual English teachers leads me now to summarise the most important implications of this study in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: THE STRENGTHS OF MULTILINGUAL TEACHERS

9.1. Introduction: relating methodology to content

I will now summarise the findings of this study, showing how the initial research questions have led to an exploration of how multilingual teachers construct their language learning and teaching trajectories. My research has shown how these teachers have developed their professional roles in their local contexts, and how their roles are invested with power through local knowledge and expertise, thus challenging the implicit deficit in their ‘non-native speaker’ status. The major findings show teachers using resistance and independence to develop professionalism in various unexpected ways which have important implications for how English teaching is viewed globally.

Throughout this study I have been guided by the attitudes and opinions offered by participants as they responded to my questions about their relationship with English language. I started the journey prompted by the desire to find out whether ‘non-native’ English teachers in fact possessed superior strengths to ‘native speakers.’ My first interviews therefore began with a plan to ask ‘non-native’ teachers about their experiences working with ‘native speakers’ in their countries. As conversations progressed, the questions appeared too limiting and superficial. Certainly, participants were able to describe their interactions with and attitudes to foreign teachers but what became more important was to build up a picture of where English fitted into their lives, to which the ‘native speaker’ debate seemed to contribute only a minor interest.

The research pointed to the need to revise existing beliefs about the global nature of English language teaching. Beneath this global image, major differences are discernible, resulting from location, history, culture, politics and related factors. Recent exhortations to examine the local nature of English use (Canagarajah, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2008a; Pennycook, 2001a) led me to formulate a research plan that would shed light on the local by asking locals themselves, i.e. multilingual teachers of English working in a range of contexts, how they had experienced English in their lives. An integral part of this plan was an interpretive paradigm drawing on conversational interaction, which took its validity from the shared professional background of researcher and participants. Connections could be made between participants and researcher

because of the very method of accumulating the data, setting up the conditions described by Bourdieu:

By offering the respondent an absolutely exceptional situation for communication, freed from the usual constraints (particularly of time) that weigh on most everyday exchanges and opening up alternatives which prompt the articulation of worries needs or wishes discovered through this very articulation, the researcher helps create the conditions for an extraordinary discourse. (2002: 649)

With the researcher coming from the dubiously named ‘Centre’ and the participants coming from the equally dubiously named ‘Periphery’, there was an opportunity to re-evaluate these terms, especially as both ‘Centre’ and ‘Periphery’ members had changed positions at various times in their professional lives. As researcher, I am still responsible for choosing what to include in this study but I have been guided by my participants to uncover the, at times, ‘hidden and counter’ (cf. Holliday, 2004) which has enriched understanding of who multilingual teachers are, and what they do, according to their own perceptions.

The study revealed that interpreting reality depends very much on the position of the interpreter. This in itself, as one of the cornerstones of qualitative research, is not a new discovery but the dominance of ‘centre’ beliefs continues to obscure the concerns of those outside the ‘centre’ to the extent that they are ignored or turned into fiction. One such fiction is the superiority of the ‘native speaker’ teacher abroad, shown to be such from the ways in which these individuals are dealt with by their hosts. My research has shown that understanding English teaching as a global enterprise has meant listening to less dominant voices and appreciating views of the profession which may run counter to one’s own expectations.

The literary critic Erich Auerbach, in *Mimesis* (1953) believed that reality could be reported in this way:

But the things that happen to a few individuals in the course of a few minutes, hours, or possibly even days- these one can hope to report with reasonable completeness. (1953: 549)

His view of reality relates to my use of narrative in qualitative research, as my participants have described things that happened to them, which I have now interpreted with a view to illustrating changing realities of the profession. Auerbach discussed Virginia Woolf’s representation of

reality in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), where the description of a single moment in an individual's life achieves a 'realistic depth' (ibid: 552) leading to an enhanced understanding of the commonalities of human existence. Auerbach, writing during the upheaval of the second world war in Europe, was prescient, if perhaps optimistic, in his vision of a shrinking world:

Beneath the conflicts, and perhaps through them, an economic and cultural levelling process is taking place. It is still a long way to a common life of mankind on earth, but the goal begins to be visible. And it is most concretely visible now in the unprejudiced, precise, interior and exterior representation of the random moment in the lives of different people (ibid: 552).

This reflection highlighting 'the lives of different people' mirrors the emphasis on a study of local practices which focuses on 'an understanding of how people achieve daily life through language' (Pennycook, 2010: 32). Auerbach is referring to people's lives in a general way. Whereas I am focusing on the lives of multilingual teachers, my aim is still to achieve a representation of reality that takes account of the 'local practices' described by Pennycook and others. My participants have given 'daily life' centre stage with their reminiscences of how they deal with English in their lives as professionals. In this way, the local has come back into prominence enabling the emergence of a 'real' picture of global English use. Furthermore, individual stories add meaning to the local and the personal because they illustrate the interaction between exterior and interior realities defining and validating meaningful existence and hence meaningful professional behaviour. By describing their view of the worlds they inhabit and their reaction to those worlds, multilingual teachers display a knowledge of self and other which the local practice of English teaching requires.

At the same time, participants revealed concerns unexpected in the extent to which they dominate professional worldviews. Learning about the root causes of these concerns has enabled me to situate the profession within the current restlessness alluded to by terms such as 'lack of fixity', 'borderless', 'transglobal flows', 'cultural hybridity', which abound in the literature and denote a preoccupation with movement and change, to some extent the result of Globalisation (cf Chapter 2). Multilingual teachers who have lived in more than one culture are able to acknowledge difference and select the features of the alien culture that they feel may be advantageous for them.

Within this framework of changing realities, the most significant discoveries are related to the views of multilingual teachers concerning the role of the native speaker, teaching methods and the place of English in non-English background societies. My research questions have guided me in making these discoveries, and I repeat them here:

1. How do multilingual English teachers take ownership of their professionalism in contexts where English is not the major language?
2. How do multilingual teachers of English view the place of English in countries where it is not the first language?
3. What are the issues facing multilingual teachers in a changing English language teaching context?

I have used these questions as a framework for the conclusions I have drawn from my data, summarized in the following sections.

9.2. Reviewing the role of the ‘native speaker’

Investigating attitudes to foreign or ‘native speaker’ teachers was one of the motivating forces behind this research and at the outset, my expectations were somewhat superficial, as I was focusing on perceived inequities between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ speakers but as I progressed with data collection, I found I was mistaken. Certainly, there were some inequities regarding employment conditions and occasional freedom from curriculum requirements but, on the whole, participants had such matters in hand and there was evidence of increasing awareness of the need to consider carefully the experience and skills that foreign (native speakers) could contribute. More importantly, there was also evidence that multilingual teachers had formed perceptions of ‘native speakers’ that did not attribute to them the superiority which a few may have imagined to be their due.

The use of the term ‘non-native speaker’ has been shown to have limited application in the data. There are three main reasons. The term gives undue emphasis to ‘native-ness’ as a quality for teaching English; it reinforces prejudice by promoting the notion that native speakers can be easily defined and are readily noticeable by virtue of skin colour and, and most significantly for what has been learnt in this study, it gives no value to contextual knowledge. Reliance on the term ‘non-native speaker’, moreover, does not allow for consideration of the knowledge acquired

by teachers who have had to learn the language with conscious effort because historically, the dichotomy of ‘native/non-native’ has conferred an advantage which is not always justified on the ‘native’ side of the binary.

The role of the ‘native speaker’ occupied two major positions in the data; it was seen by some participants as a measure of excellence, but one which they later discarded and it became a flesh and blood reality as participants described the experience of working alongside ‘native speakers’, or, in their context, foreign teachers.

For some multilingual teachers, the concept of the ‘native speaker’ is a stepping-stone to their own self-realization. Thai5f, for example, stated that one of her first learning goals was to be ‘like a native speaker’ but, with time, other preoccupations took over. Thai3f realized that she did not need to turn herself into a ‘native speaker’, accepting her identity as Thai and thus echoing the attitudes of published multilingual researchers, e.g. Li, who have managed to build on concepts established by ‘centre’ researchers to develop a new level of confidence. Li (2007 Chapter 2) achieved this by taking on board Cook’s notion of ‘multicompetence’ which allowed her to feel more than a second-rate English speaker.

9.2.1. Positioning; ‘native’ speakers seen by ‘non-native’ speakers

The most unexpected revelation about the ‘flesh and blood native speaker’ is that they do not seem to be seen as a threat. Perceptions evolve as formalised learning gives way to teaching in participants’ professional lives. Memories of teachers often set the English teacher against others in a positive light: ‘they were not tough’ (Indi1f), ‘my English teacher dressed well’ (Thai3f). When foreign teachers became colleagues, they were the ones in need of support from local staff, and Thai1f had a story of taking a distressed foreigner to hospital at 2am, to quote one example. In these circumstances, native speakers were not perceived as threatening. The world of the multilingual teacher, then, is well populated with ‘native speakers’ but they are not necessarily seen as the dominant side of a dichotomy. Rather, they are welcomed into local environments to fulfil a specific purpose and local teachers are very capable of judging how well they do so, as when Chin1f and Thai3f claim that they do not teach grammar well (Chapter 6). Native speakers are included among participants’ early teachers, they are sought in cities (cf. Chapter 5, in Thailand and Vietnam) for oral skills practice, and they are employed to satisfy local regulations (e.g. China, Thailand). Their teaching roles seem to be clearly delineated, so

that they provide support in ways that local institutions deem appropriate. Occasionally, there is a sense of inequity, such as when they are seen to have better conditions than local staff, but these issues depend on local policies and cannot be easily judged outside the employing institution. Of greater interest is the sense that there is not the same division into inferior and superior members of the profession based on speakerhood that was found to exist by Aboshiha, in her study of 'native speaker' teachers. Her participants claimed that there was 'respect' for 'native speakers' in many locations. However, my multilingual participants have expressed reservations about the 'native speakers' working in their institutions. The contrast in views is possibly due to the self-confidence of the native speakers, who appear to believe they represent British educational and teacher training systems which are superior to 'other' educational systems and training. They believe that both the 'other' systems and 'other' learners are in need of adopting a more British understanding of education (Aboshiha, 2008: 219).

It is possible that 'native speakers' who hold these beliefs have not really considered any alternatives. They may have been seduced by the unfailing politeness and hospitality of the host country, which some of my Thai participants exemplified, to believe even more strongly in their own superiority. The evidence of Chinese, Thai and Indian participants in Chapter 6 accords with Aboshiha's 'native speaker' participant who asserts his superiority for teaching pronunciation but not with respect to grammar, which they claim is better done by 'non-native speakers'. Furthermore, the local staff express an alternate view of the belief expressed by Aboshiha's 'native speakers' that they are preferred for employment:

When talking of 'non-native speaker' English language teachers in his institution in Saudi Arabia, Rob said 'there are not supposed to be any' (59-60). Rob reinforced this comment with these remarks: 'I think, world-wide, there is a respect for native speakers' (131-133). He also added: 'There is a respect for 'native speakers' on the part of this institution. Alex added '[My institution] wanted only 'native speakers' (135). Vera, too, said: 'In Japan, [in my institution] 'native speakers' are seen as people who can come and improve the level of teaching and learning' (57-58). (Aboshiha, 2008: 139)

According to Chin1f, Chin4m and Thai1f, there are government regulations requiring the employment of a certain number of 'native speakers', regardless of their quality – or

qualifications, and thus there are different perceptions of the value of ‘native speakers’ which seem to depend on individual backgrounds. Perhaps the ‘native speakers’ are secure in their own sense of superiority and cannot imagine that they might be seen as lacking in any way. On the other hand, the multilingual, or ‘non-native’ speakers are secure in their own environments and, having attained senior positions in their institutions, are able to make judgements of the foreigners they employ, who, while helpful, may not always be able to live up to local expectations. The main reasons for this seem to be a perceived lack of knowledge of both teaching content, especially grammar, and local culture, in terms of expected behaviour.

9.2.2. Understanding teacher cognition: identity and confidence

This study has shown how teacher cognition needs to be expanded to include prior language learning. Participants were universally positive in their memories of learning English, and these memories seem to have accompanied them throughout their professional lives. ‘Beliefs established early on in life are resistant to change even in the face of contradictory evidence.’ (Borg, 2003: 85) The stories and reminiscences of participants provide background to understanding teacher cognition because they uncover seldom discussed experiences which are shown to impact on professional attitudes. The longitudinal perspective, going back to childhood memories, enriches understanding of the development of appropriate skills, including making the most of local opportunities to practise the language and acquiring a contrastive awareness of linguistic systems, in terms of how English is structured compared to one’s own language (cf. Chapter 7).

In some cases, it is possible to act confidently as a consequence of understanding the role of various languages but in others, particularly in colonial societies, there may be uncertainties resulting from historical background. Being confident with one’s identity as an English teacher depends on the ability to see clearly what one may reasonably be expected to achieve. Often the experience of studying abroad has a noticeable impact on confidence so that teachers returning home feel themselves armed with the knowledge to bring about necessary changes, although they may still have local regulations to contend with. However, as Chin4m avers, confidence may be gained simply by exposure to English when teachers visit English-speaking countries, and this of itself is valuable when they return home with what is seen as superior knowledge. Professional confidence, then, consists in increased communicative competence and in knowledge of teaching

methodology. The former is self-evident while the latter requires collaboration with existing authorities and involves delicate balancing of cultural and educational values. Recognition of this need for fine-tuning is only beginning to be given, and depends also on a degree of confidence in local approaches.

Little research has in fact been conducted on teachers working within familiar contexts that add strength to their own sense of professional identity. The present study shows that teachers derive confidence not only from their knowledge of familiar contexts but also from having conquered the unfamiliar when they have had opportunities to study abroad.

9.2.3 The value of contextual knowledge

In non-Centre locations, issues of ‘which English’ are not as important as how to overcome local obstacles. In English-speaking countries there is an abundance of resources to draw on, compared to countries where the language is rarely heard but still required to be taught, because it is seen as a way into the developed world, of which English is a symbol. It is common knowledge that students see English as the way to a better life, and participants agree that this is the main motivation for their learners. At the same time, it is also common knowledge that the encroachment of English may be a threat to existing languages and cultures (Pennycook, 1994) and may lead to an unfortunate degree of self-marginalization (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), as well as to an unjustified belief in the superiority of the ‘centre’ (Holliday, 2005). Multilingual teachers are the best qualified to combat these threats because in most cases they profess a degree of respect for their own language and culture and, like their students, see English as a necessary tool for achieving a comfortable life (Thai3f). As individuals who have learnt English to a high level of proficiency, but who have worked, and mostly still work, in non-English dominant environments, they have developed a sense of their own professionalism.

Understanding the role of English in countries which have long traditions of communicating adequately without the use of a foreign language can be a difficult concept for teachers educated to teach English as an additional or foreign language. However, multilingual English teachers reveal a control of language use which allows them to choose how they prefer to use English. They show themselves to be comfortable with an identity grounded in their own language/s and

culture, making room for English only to support perceived and well defined goals. This position has not been easily reached; Chapter 5 has provided instances of the linguistic shock experienced by teachers from Thailand, used to being at the highest academic level, feeling much inferior once they found themselves studying alongside non-Thai students in the US. Hence adjusting to English use has meant adjusting to the world in English and finding a way of dealing with multilingualism that does not confer inferiority.

By sharing their reflections on their experiences, multilingual teachers have revealed how they break down borders to redefine the profession worldwide, bringing into prominence the relevance of local knowledge, accompanied by a different range of preoccupations than may be supposed. Local concerns are important because they dictate the conditions that operate for teaching.

The most frequently reiterated concern in the data involves the lack of exposure to English, both for teachers and students. Chin4m asserts the need for Chinese teachers to travel to English-speaking countries; Thai5f refers to the lack of confidence among local teachers to teach speaking skills; Phil1f laments the low level of English which preventing trainees from learning about methodology because they still need to increase their proficiency. Students from rural areas in China and Vietnam have few opportunities to access English and are therefore at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers in the cities. Such closely felt involvement with the local empowers multilingual teachers in their struggle for recognition as they expose these conditions to a growing audience.

9.3. The place of English and resisting its takeover: cultural and local influences

Canagarajah describes a ‘quiet’ resistance to English:

... postcolonial theorists will often argue that resistance to English is already taking place in the everyday life of people in the periphery. Such subtle strategies of resistance are more often discursive and behavioural than ambitiously global or overtly structural. So nativized versions of English, novel English discourses in post-colonial literature, and the hybrid mixing of languages in indigenous communities, are quiet ways in which resistance against English is already being displayed. (Canagarajah, 1999b: 42).

My participants demonstrated even more subtle resistance. Their very use of other languages allows them to limit English to particular purposes. By finding a place for English, they prevent its encroachment into their lives, and cast it in a role which lies somewhere between a 'subject' to be studied and a 'tool' for the achievement of other goals. In their case, English has given them a career; it is, moreover, a subject for which they felt great enthusiasm and so limiting its use in their lives need not be interpreted as negative but simply pragmatic and in accordance with their non-English speaking contexts. The instances of resistance recorded include expressions of unwillingness to use English outside of professional situations or with colleagues and positive efforts to use other languages for, e.g., family communication. Sometimes the resistance is not controlled by the participant, as when Indi1f's family declines to speak English with her. In summary, family are among the strongest motivating factors for not using English, for a variety of reasons. Sing2m gave respect for his mother's lack of English as a reason for not using it at home, while Sing1f insisted her father use Tamil rather than English (in which he was proficient) to communicate with her.

On the other hand, family are also behind the introduction to English, as recalled by many participants, notably Thai3f and Indo1f, who were both influenced by their fathers, while Phil1f was encouraged by her mother. Indi1f remembers her family boasting about her achievements in English.

Family could also influence career choice, as with Thai3f and Thai4f, who wanted both to be near their parents and to make them proud. Family is an underestimated influence on the lives of multilingual teachers; it often has an effect on the early stages of learning and in maturity it can impact on both career choice and use of English.

9.3.1. The value of cultural hybridity in providing an alternative view

Views about culture were prompted by a number of factors including being taught by and working with foreign teachers, studying overseas, using materials produced overseas and considering national attitudes to the importation of foreign ideas. Culture, however, did not emerge as a strong theme for teachers working in familiar contexts, perhaps because culture today is most often introduced as a term to indicate difference, and participants in this study are not overly threatened by difference since they are working in contexts familiar to them. Another

reason for limited attention being paid to notions of culture could be that current interpretations of the term are western and strongly focused on stereotypical views of the Other, as proposed by Said, when he defined the western concept of orientalism (1979). Non-western, multilingual teachers of English are not in the position of having to redress unfavourable essentialist beliefs. On the contrary, according to Canagarajah, they have access to an enlightened hybridity:

The position of the hybrid subject situated in the margins of discourses and cultures is therefore creative and radical. Probing the dynamics of one culture from the spectacles afforded by the other, they are able to resist the tendency to be uncritically absorbed into a single cultural or discursive system. (1999b: 183).

From this position, cultural hybridity (cf. Kumaravadivelu, 2008a, discussed in Chapter 2) becomes a valuable resource because it enables individuals to stand back and consider the advantages of different cultural attitudes, as Sing2m, among others, found when he studied in the US (Chapter 5). Without the burden of western cultural superiority, individuals are well on the way to developing what Holliday defines as ‘a decentred, critical cosmopolitanism.’ He adds ‘the Centre-West must withdraw from imposing its own definitions and allow space for the Periphery to express its own cultural realities in its own terms’ (2011: 16). In my study, ‘cultural realities’, I believe, emerge through the experiences of participants as they define their professionalism. Their ‘cultural realities’ are the traditional local influences that they encounter on a daily basis which give meaning to their work in ways that require ‘space’ from outsiders. The term encompasses allusions to culture referring to different ways of learning (Sing2m, Chin4m) to different social customs and behaviour (Thai3f, Thai 4f, Chin4m) and to religious influences (Phillf), as these are all ‘realities’ governing ideas and behaviour and therefore culturally inspired.

Working in their own contexts multilingual teachers are unlikely to feel threatened by the cultural aspects of English, although they recognise that some aspects represented in course books may be inappropriate for their students. The data revealed an ability to critically select and adapt material, another aspect of taking ownership of one’s professionalism, and at the same time to resist lavishly produced textbooks from the Centre:

... periphery teachers and students may have different ways of translating or applying the resources they take from outside. The specific uses to which they put such resources may feature subtle forms of resisting and modifying pedagogical

prescriptions. Apart from cultural processes of appropriation, there are other local material and institutional influences that mediate the use of centre methods. (Canagarajah, 1999b: 105).

The underlying theme of resistance resurfaces in this comment on resources and is borne out by the earlier observations about cultural adaptation of materials. In summary, ‘cultural realities’ can be seen to shape many aspects of professionalism while, in the process, encouraging multilingual teachers to constantly critique unfamiliar cultural attitudes.

9.4 Implications of this study and final comments

It is not easy to generalise across cultures and consequently, there has been a great deal of controversy over the choice of appropriate teaching methods for particular contexts. The backgrounds of trained teachers inhabiting those contexts adds important layers of understanding to the practice of English teaching in ‘the emergent cultural world’ which would embody a ‘recognition of the potentials of the Periphery’ (Holliday, 2011: 190).

Perhaps the most interesting aspect to be uncovered by the research is the paradoxical nature of English Language Learning in local contexts. On the one hand there is a clearly expressed enthusiasm for learning the language, but on the other, there is a resistance to allowing it to dominate. Multilingual English teachers themselves enjoy their relationship with English and are often concerned at the lack of ability among trainee teachers. They are aware of the need to find new and better ways of providing support for learners while being conscious of the importance of preserving their own languages, so that with family, for example, English is rarely spoken.

There is thus a life beyond English and this point has implications for future directions in English teaching. CLT, for example, needs to be refashioned to reflect the place of English in particular contexts. This means that materials need to be designed to give priority to learning goals. Again, this is not a new concept, but attention needs to be drawn to the place of English in multilingual societies. It has already been observed that CLT was developed in English-speaking countries for students having access to English-speaking society but the transferral of CLT to non-English speaking societies demands a review of appropriate methodology so that the confusion arising from understandings of the ‘weak’ approach can be addressed. A blending of

approaches might allow for more successful learning, as recognised many years ago by Cortazzi and Jin's students. Teachers like Tsui's example, Minfang, would then be absolved from the need to slavishly adopt a foreign method they were not comfortable with. Nonetheless, implementing flexible methods of course delivery is not usually favoured by ministries of education, whose accountability requires them to set down more rigorous schemes and so the recognition that flexibility is needed will take time and effort to achieve. Multilingual teachers who have studied abroad may well be in the best position to recommend these changes, because they have been, in most cases, sent overseas to find out better ways of designing English programs. If these teachers are sensitive to their own learning cultures and what features of a foreign learning method may be introduced into them, they will have a good chance of success, but if they simply return to their countries with the aim of reproducing in entirety what they have observed in the country they studied in, their efforts will be wasted. The question then becomes how to train multilingual teachers to make the most of local resources. This research has shown that while there is a measure of confidence gained from studying abroad, this confidence should also be directed to looking at what the home country does well. Otherwise the result could be the confusion described by Indilf, who felt she had never been encouraged to value her first language and culture. Programs for teachers studying abroad need to be flexible enough to allow for variations in educational cultures and teachers need to be encouraged to work across cultures and methods and to evaluate critically what will work for them.

The existence of the borderless world has been acknowledged, but it does not mean that all contexts are the same. Rather it means that a range of contexts is recognised, with the possibility of transporting knowledge from one to another – without border controls. In fact, there are unlimited opportunities for mixing methods and approaches but success in these endeavours will only come with a critical appraisal of the context and this is where the strengths of multilingual teachers can be best employed. As yet, this critical function remains underdeveloped, perhaps because of too strong an insistence on learning and importing from foreign sources. The experiences recounted by multilingual teachers reveal a vast storehouse of important knowledge to be exploited in the further pursuit of the profession.

What has in fact been learnt about the identities of multilingual teachers? Firstly, there is the complexity of themes such as nation, language, education, which seem, through familiarity, very

straightforward. Identity cannot be defined according to a set of formulae but depends on the choices people make which are relevant to their situation. There are degrees of freedom of choice – from the so-called ‘cultural supermarket’ to choices dictated by difficult political situations or, in the middle of these extremes, the simple desire for a better life economically.

Regarding identity and the ‘non-native’ speaker teacher, it is necessary to downgrade the importance of native speakerness by recognising the importance of other aspects of identity. Being part of a particular social and linguistic context and possessing an understanding of these contexts carries more weight and indicates more clearly the qualities required for successful English language professionals. In particular, English language professionals today need to exhibit knowledge of the place of English in their communities. It follows that professionals moving from one context to another must be trained to recognise diverse teaching environments and consequent student needs.

Local knowledge empowers teachers to judge how far English should be allowed to be imposed on their societies. Hegemonic practices are reduced through local intervention because of the strong awareness of the ties between language and identity, so that languages are assigned places in people’s lives according to their perceived needs. Multilingual speakers, with the benefit of their linguistically rich backgrounds, reveal insights about language use which lie well outside the experience of native speakers who have not made the same journey.

The study has also shown that the importance of not neglecting practical issues, such as lack of appropriate language skills, training or materials, transcends cultural attitudes. In fact, resources and training seem to constitute the most serious issues which teachers have to deal with. Such concerns are not necessarily related to culture, but to the basic needs which would be perceived by any teacher. An accompanying professional reality is that the skills and knowledge required to become a successful English teacher are not simply linguistic, cultural and pedagogic; there is also a growing importance attached to understanding the context in which English is used in terms of local beliefs and attitudes, involving historical and social influences. Multilingual teachers, who have been exposed to other languages and cultures than their own, are able to achieve a balanced view of cultural and linguistic interfaces and hence find a place for English which complements, rather than destroys, existing practices.

Another topic for review stems from the consistent references to grammar teaching and knowledge by nearly all participants, often showing a marked division between ‘grammar’ and ‘CLT’ with an apparent belief expressed by many that knowledge of grammar must precede communicative competence. Their observations encompass attitudes by ‘native speaker’ teachers, and an assessment of knowledge, as well as beliefs about its importance in their own contexts. Clarification of how these aspects of language learning co-exist would be a relevant step forward. The preoccupation with grammar expressed by most participants indicates that further research into the role of grammar teaching would shed light on the contrasts highlighted in this study. The two main points of contrast concern, firstly, how multilingual teachers compare their views with ‘native speakers’ and secondly, the extent to which CLT and grammar are seen to be mutually exclusive.

Overall, the research has shown that there are ways of resisting English that do not amount to outright rejection. The tension between enthusiasm and resistance has dominated aspects of learning, using and teaching English so that on the one hand, English learning is a popular activity and a desirable career, and using it imparts confidence to interact in global circles. On the other hand, there is a need expressed to protect one’s own cultural and linguistic identity by maintaining one’s own (first) language within the private sphere of family and home. Attitudes to ‘native speaker’ teachers, to materials and methods and to the language itself have all revealed facets of this duality of thinking. Participants have displayed how they manage these tensions alongside the development of important professional skills, largely due to the possession of multilingual knowledge. The recognition of the multilingual skills of English language teachers is, therefore, the principal recommendation of this research.

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